THE

MAYOR OF WIND-GAP.

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THE

MAYOR OF WIND-GAP

AND

CANVASSING.

BY THE O'HARA FAMILY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE



MAYOR OF WIND-GAP.

CHAPTER I.

An evening in the fine fresh month of May. Those Ephemera called, by some anglers, the May-fly, by some others the Green-Duke, and by some others, out of our country, whatever they choose to call them, had emerged in great abundance from their long imprisonment beneath the waters, and were now fulfilling the purposes of their brief atmospheric life. They swarmed in the slanting sun beams, whisking their (to them)

long tails, and fluttered their mottled wings, with such an appearance of thorough enjoyment, that it seemed as if their new state of being, was to be altogether devoted to worldly revelry and thoughtless love-making. In a very short time, however, after their sports, the contingent and inevitable cares, to which every animate atom is liable, engrossed them. They settled down upon the water, from which they had arisen, preparing for a voyage (to them literally a voyage down the stream of life); their wings, lately so alert, were, in order to serve them as sails during that voyage, soberly closed together; and as the current carried them along, they shed their ovæ upon it, that a new race might be ensured, who should frolic in the May-beam of the ensuing year; and their providential responsibility thus discharged, they drooped and died, after having been but for a few hours the denizens of the breeze, which had summoned them into a new existence.

While these tiny creatures made their short entrances and exits, the voracious and gigantic trout was not an idle observer of some of their motions. He gulped them down in scores, either in their journey upwards, from the bottom of the river, into the regions of air, and while yet unfledged for their airy gambols, or when subsequently floating on the stream in their maternal pride, he broke the water into circles, of each of which the centre was a little vortex, formed by him for their annihilation: nor was the trout the only devourer of these truly short-lived beings; the martin, the swallow, and the swift, glancing with arrowy speed through them in mid air, or over them on the river, snatched them from the very hey-day of their pastimes.

It is well known to all "brothers of the angle" that in this refreshing month of May, when the green-duke thus sails along the water, the sportsman who skilfully imitates,

and uses it, may expect to plod homeward, after the dusk of the evening, with his basket well laden on his back. Upon the evening then, which opens our tale, along the banks of a certain river in the south of Ireland, the most skilful deceiver of the finny tribe known in the parish pursued his recreation. Through all his operations, this individual displayed the skill of a master in his art. His fishing-rod, owing to the dexterity of his jerk, cut whistling through the calm air; his line fell smoothly and straightly on the stream, touching it even to a hair's breadth, at the exact point he wished; and, a good copy of the green-duke powerfully aiding him, his success was equal to his adroitness; for he drew forth trout after trout, in quick succession.

Maurteen Maher seemed rather an elderly man, yet quite alert in all his movements. He was tall and thin, with angular features, a sallow complexion and a shrewd eye; and

although many might call him ill-favoured, there was something inviting in his smile, and respectable in the steady intelligence of his look. The general expression of his face was, however, habit of observation, and a consciousness of intellectual superiority, perhaps ostentatiously displayed. His greyish well-combed hair, fell in great profusion on his shoulders, yet he wore over it,—or rather over half of it—a wig of three buckles; his hat was very broad-brimmed; his loose outside coat had an ample cape, and was drawn and held tight round his waist by a belt of horse-skin, which also performed the duty of suspending his fishing-panier.

In the act of extracting his favourite green-duke from a freshly-taken trout, Maurteen Maher suddenly bent his head downwards and listened.

"Aye, that's her own merry little laugh," —he soliloquized, "and 'twould be a pity, the happy heart that's in her body should

ever know the blight of sorrow; and yet, for all that, as lightly as she steps along—and no bird of spring is blither—sorrow will darken over her early, if Maurteen Maher does not stand her friend."

While he spoke these words slowly and sententiously, the object of his sympathy appeared in view. Although at the beginning of his soliloquy his acute ear had distinguished her approach, by the notes of her laugh, they had at the moment been hidden from each other, by a sudden sinuosity of the river, curving with the curve of the flowery bank by which it wandered. Now, as he discovered her at a distance, Maurteen looked steadily towards the owner of "the happy little heart," and continued talking to himself:—

"The boy is at her side of a surety- -and tisn't the running wather, nor the May-bush full of its blossom that he cares to be looking on; no—he's looking into her eyes to know

if the love is there; and tis'nt the song of the thrush nor the note of the sky-lark above his head, that he's giving ear to; no—he hears nothing but her silver little voice, that turns all she spakes into music. She's joking at him, I see: Och! aye; but the glance she gives to him, and the smile that's on her lips, don't mane to tell us that she's so hard-hearted entirely. It is just the way I thought it was. He's not the shape of a *gorsoon* a girl would darken her brow at.—Sure if it's a thing that a purty creature in the bloom of her beauty makes a boy's heart leap with joy, a young colleen may like the lad that's comely and goes brave; aye; that's a story of ould standing, as ould as the time that Adam used to be coorting Eve. Long ago: but I'll tell ye my notion; if the good luck happened that our great-grand-mother, Mistress Eve, was an ugly ould crature with wrinkles on her face, and no teeth in her gums,—when poor Adam first

set his eye upon her, by my good troth we'd be in Paradise this blessed day; the poor fool of a gardener would never be ating that misfortunate apple, for an auld *calloch's* bidding, I'll be bound."

The persons thus commented on by Maurteen Maher, were a girl of twenty, and a youth perhaps a year older, and, judging by their dress, their manners, and their bearing, they belonged to the better class of society. We have never pretended to much talent in describing female beauty; in the present instance, however, it is no difficult task to say that Anny Kennedy was somewhat below the middle stature; of a perfect symmetry of shape, with a complexion, clear, brilliant, blooming, yet free of vulgar redness—

"The rose insensibly mingling with the lily,"

as young ladies love to write it. It is quite as easy to declare that she possessed very dark eyes, of which every glance [illegible]

merriment, shot through a dazzling sunniness — this latter quality, being softened, however, by the crystal moisture in which they swam; that her lips were very red, and very pouting, but not very saucily so—that most tantalizing expression relieving itself by an admixture of innocent playfulness; and we may add, that, anticipating her constant smile, there were courier-dimples near the corners of her mouth; that in the centre of her almost transparent chin there was the mark—

"Love's dimpling finger did impress;"

that, from beneath her large-leafed, low-crowned, black silk hat, her very black hair fell, of course

"In jetty ringlets on her snowy neck,"

aye, and sometimes wantoned over her shoulders; that her waist was tiny—for in those days young girls (and sometimes old ones too) laced themselves as tight as they

do in our own day; and that her little mouse-like feet hid themselves in shoes of which the heels were nearly three inches high, but which still did not succeed in spoiling the symmetry of the exceedingly pretty objects they covered. We have presumed to say, that there would be no difficulty in mentioning these things; but at last we own to ourselves that we fail in our effort to give an idea of the guileless happiness, the twinkling intellect, the almost childish, yet full, play of mind, catching merriment from every sympathizing object, and, withal, the scarce-hidden consciousness of superior beauty, and the youthful avidity to exact the tributes of its conquering influence, which ran through the whole of her expression.

Maurteen Maher has called Anny's companion "a gorsoon that a young colleen would not darken her brow at," and we think he was right. The lover's hair, as well as his mistress's, was very dark, his

face oval, and rather pale; his eye powerful, feeling, and of strong manly character; his lip curving beautifully, whether in sternness or in smiles;—his person finely formed. —There was in his look, his air, his manner, his most ordinary address, a depth, an ardency, and yet a pathos of expression: from the very manifestations of his mere exterior, he seemed to be a man who felt every thing intensely.—At present, even under the softening influence of the universal conqueror,—he was more self-absorbed than anything else. To be sure, the innocent lamb could not seem to be (if it ever has seemed any thing it was not) more gentle than he appeared to Anny;—and under any circumstance, or in the person of any other animal, his equal or his inferior in the intellectual scale, never could George Blundell have uttered gentler, or more timid, or even more slavish, sounds, than those to which his handsome mouth now gave utter-

ance;—never could his strong eye have been more moistened—more subdued—more half-put-out, in fact; and yet, it is still maintained—(or rather insinuated—for we do not want really to injure the boy, if we can help it)—that all the time Anny was thinking of him, during these symptoms, he was thinking nearly as much about himself as he was about her. Is it very new to assert such a thing?

Although Anny Kennedy loved her tamed enthusiast, still, prompted by the heyday consciousness of her beauty and her power, she sported with him. From this we infer that she never reflected how fiery a nature, passionate for good or evil, might lie hidden under his silky mildness of demeanor towards herself. But in truth, the effect upon him of her merely arch equivocations was, could she have understood it, something that she never would have provoked. The young man hoped, and feared,

doubted, and felt certain, triumphed, and desponded, was raised to ecstasy, or lowered to misery; and all this so fretted and fevered him, as to make George Blundell a very incompetent person to engage in any other matters of life, with the calmness of mind, and the precision of action, necessary for honourable success.

"In good truth, Mr. George Blundell," said Anny, shortly before she fell under the keen, though friendly, notice of Maurteen Maher—and as she spoke, she gave her head a little coquettish movement, that put in motion the jetty curls on her ivory brow, and caused to gambol over their loved resting place the ringlets which flowed to her neck—assuming, at the same time, a mock gravity of aspect, and yet turning the full glory of her glance upon her impatient, though obsequious, victim. "In good truth, Mr. George Blundell, there is something questionable in your conduct."

"Something questionable in my conduct, beautiful Anny? Good heaven,—of what can you suspect me, unworthy of the—— I mean, do you suppose I could be capable, in the slightest degree, of conceiving an idea of acting, in the most trifling matter, so as to give you—the least reason to—"

"Reason to think that you have been stringing together the most ridiculous set of words I have ever listened to? So that's something questionable, is it not?"—And she laughed.

He, too, tried to laugh; and, "Anny," said he, pathetically, "dear Anny, can you be serious for one minute?"

"Serious? no, indeed; serious I cannot be—serious I will not be; this is not the season for being serious; for hanging down the head and looking dull. No, Sir; come to me, and ask me to be serious, when the sky lowers—when the rough blast shakes doors and windows—when the chilly sleet

darkens the cheery sun—when our poor cat mopes at the hearth, and my little dog lies shivering on his cushion—(see how he frisks before me *now!*)—Mr. George Blundell, I am not made to be serious while the lark is soaring above me, filling the air and my poor ears with his trumpet-like melody; while the little bubbling billows of the stream dance jigs and country-dances to his music, in the light of the setting sun; while the swallow darts by me, twittering out his evening song; while the fresh breeze flirts with my cheek—"

"Ah!" sighed George Blundell, in a very long sigh—"That's a happy breeze, Anny—"

"To be sure it is! and it is so, because it is not serious;—look, Sir, look!"—and she touched his arm, and pointed across the river to a sloping meadow, with such sudden and fresh and true energy, that not only George Blundell, but also her faithful maid

in waiting, close behind them, started and looked frightened as if something was going to happen to it.

"See, how it frolics yonder, through the yet green hay! *That* has always pleased me, for it is always seen when lovely spring is at her full. Do you know, to my fancy, the in-earnest breeze sometimes appears in positive shape, as it skims over the tender meadow—"

"Darling Anny!—how beautiful and true every thing is when you describe it."

She laughed again most cheerily, and went on—

"And do you think, Master George Blundell, so foolishly of us female creatures, as not to have known beforehand that it was to make you admire me, as well as the meadow, that I described it so beautifully and true? Look again, Sir!—I intend to make you admire me a second time, in making you condescend to admire what God has

here strewn around our path, for every one's admiration. See those *not*-serious little birds, hopping and chirping from bough to bough—"

"Ah!" again sighed George Blundell, "those little birds hop and chirp from bough to bough, with nature's full permission to be happy; for, Anny, all those beautiful little creatures, so frolicksome in the light of this May evening, are happy lovers, with their beloved ones—"

"And," said Anny, "they make love merrily, do they not? Can you see long faces on them? or can you call their accents dolorous?"—and to this little second appeal her stupid companion was so insensible that he only began to muster up one of his long drawn sighs, when Anny and he, suddenly turning the elbow of the bank before alluded to, came almost in personal contact with Maurteen Maher, and she immediately accosted him—

"I wish you a good evening, Maurteen."

"*Cead mille beeachus!** my purty young lady, and I wish for you that seventy-seven May suns, like the pleasant sun of this blessed evening, may put the white blossom on the thorn-bush to give you pleasure, and open the flowers under your feet; and that to the last minute of the time I say, you may find it in your heart to be happy on a May-path."

"I thank you," said Anny, whole-laughing and half-crying, for old Maurteen's address had pathos in it. "I thank you heartily and sincerely, my good friend."

"Don't be thanking me at all, my blooming daisy; an ould man's words, be there ever so civil, are could and damp to the heart of the young, and the good, and the comely; but the kind salutation from the handsome lips of the young, and the good,

* A hundred thousand blessings.

and the comely, cheers the heart of the ould man, as if he sat forenent the breeze that blows from the rose-bush."

"On my word though, *you* are a very gallant, poetical old man, and know how to flatter to some purpose."

"When the snow and the sleet falls, my purty crature, I feel the years heavy upon me; when the May shines out, they are not so weighty to my shouldhers; and the smiling of your cheerful face, blessing upon it, is as pleasant to me as the blighthest May-day."

"Positively, you will turn my head, good Father."

"No danger in the world of that, my purty crature; the poor head, God help it, thinks it's full of wisdom; but the heart is 'cuter, and makes a fool of it, for all that; aye, and your own handsome head will be going on turning to the side where your heart turns, this moment, if every word out of my mouth was a costly jewel."

"Why, you seem skilled in things, Maurteen."

"I'd make a wager of a silver sixpence, you know right well I'm spaking the sound sense, purty lady; and if the brave young gentleman who has won the prize, does'nt jump sky-high for his fortune, Mastha! he's an ouldher man nor I am."

As Maurteen Maher said this, he glanced archly at George Blundell, and, before the blush had passed from Anny's face, the angler cried out in the utmost ecstasy—"I'm in him!—I'm in him, your sowl!—I'm in him!"

Himself and the reel of his fishing-rod seemed to have been seized with a sudden frenzy; the latter whizzed violently, as it spun round and round, apparently of its own accord, and its handle revolved so rapidly that its motion was scarce perceptible; and at the same instant Maurteen Maher ran eagerly along the bank of the

river, his distended eyes fixed on the water; anon he stopped suddenly, hurried back the way he had come, then down again, then up again, every muscle of his face and person in twitching motion.

Anny, who had never before seen an angler engaged in the crisis of his sport, thought Maurteen mad—poetical she had before deemed him. Shortly after, she saw a fish spring many feet out of the water, near the opposite bank, and vaguely conjectured that there must be some sympathy between it and her late flatterer; for Maurteen jumped high too, crying out in the greatest glee—

"*A sieve-maker!* by my conscience—*a sieve-maker*, every inch of him!"

George Blundell, occasionally an angler himself, knew more of those proceedings than did his fair mistress, and, to her increased astonishment, sympathised with them. Hurrying to his brother of the art,

he snatched the landing-net out of his left hand, ran after him as he ran up and down, here and there—and with bent body and eager eye, prepared to raise the trout from its native element. The poor victim of Maurteen's May-duke, while its strength continued equal to its fright, fluttered or darted through the river; gradually exhausted and passive, it opposed little resistance to its captor's cautious effort to wheel it nearer and nearer, till at length, quite weary, and now lying close under him, it seemed to invite George Blundell to put forth the net.

"Be sure of what you are about!" commanded Maurteen loudly. "Make no plunges at him!—Have a care there!—have a care, I bid ye!—Would he be off again?—troth, and I'll take care he shan't if I can help it—Now he comes—have a caution what you're at!—here he is, like a May-boy—dip the net—*dip* it under him, I say—

no plunging at him—blur-an-ages! if I lose this sieve-maker by your botching, I could find it in my heart to sthrike you!—aisy now—aisy!—watch your work now, I tell you!—now—now—that's it!"—and George Blundell succeeded in getting into the net he held a fine trout of five pounds' weight.

Anny approached as Maurteen Maher flung the now lifeless fish on the grass;—"the beautiful creature! the poor innocent thing!" she cried. "Oh! how cruel is your sport, good man."

"The poor innocent thing you call him, my purty lady? I never met a greater rogue of a sieve-maker, since I first wetted a line. Did ye mind how he strove by main force to get me round that stump and make geomethries of me?"

"To get you round a stump, and make geometries of you?" asked Anny. "Now, that's something more abstruse than geometry itself, to poor me."

"He means, Anny," said George Blundell, "that the fish, by his doublings and twinings, had nearly fastened his line to the stump of a tree; which event, had it really occurred, must have caused the line to snap, and the trout to escape."

"I wish from my heart it had so happened," said Anny. "He calls it by a ridiculous kind of name, a sieve-maker, I think—I should suppose that means a large trout?"

"And a large trout it is, Anny. But I will explain our friend's terms to you, for I have learned the vocabulary of the neighbouring anglers. Once upon a time, a person who followed the trade of a sieve-maker was remarkably fortunate in taking the largest fish on the river, and since his immortal day, his professional name is given to all trouts of an unusual size."

"You tould me, purty lady," resumed Maurteen Maher, "that I have a cruel way of divarting myself; now it's mighty plain

to know that a good throut, with a big body and a little head, a broad back, and spots on his side as wide as half-crown pieces, makes very good food for poor christians; and besides, little and big as they all are together, they were all bred and born and brought up in this river for people to ate; and, moreover agin; all living things make out their life by ating one another, barring they'd be sheep or cows, or bastes of that sort; and *we* ate *them* that ate only the grass; and, as harmless as you take that fish to be, there's more than two good hundred of flies in his craw this moment, and he swallowed them down alive as they sailed on the wather; and, hearken to me; he was like many of this world's rogues, enough would'nt satisfy him, but he must be greedy for more—and so he thought to plundher me of my poor May-duke; never dhramin' that he'd swallow the hook along with it."

"And these little things tied to your line, you call them flies?" said Anny.

"I call that tail-fly my desthroyer, purty lady; that middle one my tongue-tickler; and the next to that agin, my snout-snapper."

Anny was engaged examining these oddly named baits, when, at a little distance down the river, where the rapid which rippled by them terminated in a deep, still pool, a heavy plunge was heard. A ragged young urchin had ascended a tree which overhung the water; the branch on which he would make an excursion snapped across, and headlong downwards he was precipitated, shrieking vigorously as he fell. George Blundell darted to the spot. On his arrival at the faithless tree, the boy was beating the water with his arms, gasping, and at intervals, still crying out piteously—suddenly, the water whirled round him, and he disappeared beneath it. George

only waited to pull off his coat and shoes, and then dashed in. As he reached the still circling surface of the spot where the boy had sunk, the drowning creature suddenly emerged close to him, and at once grappled with his self-destined preserver.

"Knock him from you, or ye're both lost!" shouted Maurteen Maher, from the bank immediately above them, whither he had followed, with the trembling Anny, and her hand-clapping, and loud-screaming attendant.

George Blundell was evidently conscious of his danger; he used every effort to disengage himself; he succeeded in freeing the wrist which had been particularly seized upon; but, as the desperate boy again was sinking, he locked his arms firmly around the young man's legs; and the sensation produced by the act was terrible to George Blundell. He felt himself dragged downwards to his death; he struggled with

all his force, but in vain; the despairing grasp still clutched him, like a paralysis—he was sinking rapidly: a cry of horror escaped him—down, down he was dragged — he turned his look towards the bank; he caught a vague vision of Anny stretching her arms towards him; in another instant, he was lost to her view, and he did not hear the low gurgling shriek which escaped his hitherto coquetting mistress. The water of the deep pool for an instant quivered over him, and then settled into its usual placid stillness, as if lyingly innocent of the doom it had occasioned.

Scream after scream had burst from Anny, and now she became at once motionless and silent. The surface of the water was again broken; her lover appeared above it; she shouted out his name; he looked hastily and wildly around him; he fixed his eyes more meaningly upon her; he waved his right hand towards her, and dived down-

wards, a second time disappearing, but now voluntarily, from her eyes.

Again she looked on the unbroken water without uttering a sound. George almost immediately re-emerged, squeezing tightly to him, with one arm, the stiffened body of the boy; while with the other he struck feebly for the bank. He reached it, however, safely. Old Maurteen Maher, bending down from its edge, lifted up, with difficulty, the prize which his young friend extended towards him. George himself wearily scrambled to the green sod, and there sunk down exhausted. Anny sprung to his side; knelt over him, rubbed his cold and languid hands, and his cold forehead, and pallid cheeks, nay, even kissed his forehead, and, laughing and crying together, called him "her own George, her own dear George," and at last, "her own dear, dear, and dearest George," and asked him to live, and "to live for her sake;" and, as the young man became

feebler, she repeated these expressions again and again in his ears; now unconsciously resting on her knee his drooping, and indeed, his very dripping, head. He certainly did not hear her first words; but we half suspect that George Blundell imitated insensibility for a little time, after he had comprehended her repetitions of them. At all events, he at last opened his eyes. Anny's little hand touched his cheeks, and her warm living tears dropped upon his chilled and half-dead face. He turned his eyes to hers, and, in the idiom of a true young Irish lover, of his years and time, said—

"Ever and ever, blessed be this evening! for it hears Anny tell me that she loves me!"

Although blushing to the utmost tint of a blush, Anny bent her lips to his ear, and calling him brave, and benevolent, and charitable, and generous, with many other flattering epithets, repeated her assurances of affection.

George Blundell bounded to his feet, a much more happy man than he had been before he was half drowned. The birds he had so lately envied for their "hopping and chirping," and so forth, he now seemed to despise, by the superlative hopping and chirping, and so forth way, in which he walked homewards by the side of Anny Kennedy. We wish to give a somewhat more manly impression of the youth. He felt that he had successfully ventured his own life, to save that of a very humble and insignificant human creature, and this conviction did add elasticity to his limbs, and triumphant brightness to his eye.

Maurteen Maher, with the little tatterdemalion in his arms, now also reviving as well as he could, slowly advanced to the young pair, and addressed them:

"May the good God give you his blessing this evening, young gentleman! you

have a brave and a feeling heart—it will never pass from my mind that I saw you rising from the jaws of death, and then diving into them again, of your own accord, because you would not save yourself alone, and lave this little cratur to lie stiff on the bottom of the river. He is the son of a neighbour of mine—of one that's dearer than a neighbour; he left his home with me this evening, to play at my side; and I b'leve I forgot him, when I hooked the sieve-maker; and t'would be a woful tale for me to tell, among the people that love him, that I left him a corpse under the water;—I strolled down here, this evening, may be, to have an eye on you both, as well as to thry the luck o'the Green-Duke; and, may be, for my own reasons. I had a regard for one and the other of you, beforehand; but, from this evening out, I'll sthrive to be your friend agin' the world. I won't put the chill upon your young sperrits, by say-

ing that there's a danger upon your road; but if mischief or ill-fortune ever overtakes you—listen to me:—at the very time you want a helpin' hand, then bring to your minds the ould Fisherman you met here this May-evening; and ye may have worse friends, or ye may have as thrue friends, but less able to do ye a sarvice, than Maurteen Maher, the Mayor of Wind-gap."

CHAPTER II.

In our first adventure before the awful world of literature, we attempted a description of the appearance, at some little distance, of a certain city in Ireland, as seen by two mystified lovers from a hill-side, early on a summer morning. We wonder, does any one now remember that sketch? we wonder, should we be able to try it, once again, merely, as before, from our recollections of a beloved place and prospect, even without recurrence to any former attempt? suppressing, at present, the name of the city, we

wonder, will any one recognize in our second outline, a likeness to our first? We wonder, too, have some ten long years, and not all of them very happy ones, dimmed, in memory's mirror, any of the chief features of our dear, dear scenery; and, above all things, we wonder, will any living creatures, but ourselves, go to the trouble of making any comparison on the subject? At all events, we hereby venture the experiment, changing, for certain reasons, our point of sight, yet in so unimportant a degree that no considerable omission of ours, should any such occur, can, on that account be excused.

The two lovers, for whose particular gratification we made our first picture, sat, as has been observed, on a hill-side, which fully commanded a view of the reality sketched for them. We now ascend the brow of that hill, almost in a straight line from them; pass, by a stepping-stile, a

wall which bounds it, and arrive on a road, which, running down precipitously before us, was, at the time of our present tale, although it is now superseded by a more level one, the only entrance from the metropolis into our city.

The river is seen, a depth below, its first appearance that of a darkened mirror; beyond, and high above it, towers an old feudal edifice, almost of princely structure, and in perfect preservation; but upon this feature, nearly the first in our landscape, we cannot assure ourselves of proving perfectly true to an Irish tourist of the present day and hour; for we are told that people have been pulling down our venerable old castle, and rebuilding, or remodelling it in some new fangled way or other; to our left, however, about fifty-five years ago, it elevates, over a high parapet wall, and from green and glady lawns higher still than that, its unique and sober-

tinted front, flinging on the dim water the subdued reflections of its bulk, and of its surrounding foliage and grounds;—the gentle stream, stealing and disappearing to our right, round a grassy promontory, studded with beautiful trees. The placid smoothness of the river is formed, in this place, by a semicircular weir over which the water now comes towards you, first, with a slight fall, then foaming, then less rudely broken, and at last, again subsiding into a glassy stillness, which reflects the sunny sky; but it is a second time obstructed by a barrier similar to the former one, and hurries out of your view, in noise, bubble and confusion. The blue-slated houses of the town are directly before the eye; the monotony of their appearance taken away by that of the luxuriant foliage, in which they seem embowered; and the elegant, though fantastic cupola of the town-house, the steeple, (now a taper spire,) of the prin-

cipal church, and the mitred and ivy-covered castles of ruined monasteries rising up over them, or among them, further and peculiarly relieve the naked idea of a mere ordinary haunt of men. Our feudal building bounds, as has been said, our picture to the left; an old cathedral, with its adjacent mysterious round tower, both peering high above clumps of noble lime-trees, performs the same office to the right; and then the sloping meadow land rising to you from the near bank of the river, and in the month of May, always adorned with hedge-rows of flowery thorn; the cultivated grounds ascending and extending on all sides of the valley, through which wanders our lovely river; and the frame-like line of hills, that surround almost the whole of the view, some near and distinct, some more remote and misty, and others, at a great distance, towering into bold blue mountains—This is our promised

sketch, from memory. From treacherous memory—now fast beginning to refuse—(we are sure of it, after our vague attempt,) to do justice, even a general justice, to those features of places where childhood has run riot and happy, which youth has observed and appreciated with poetical fondness, and which contain spots where moulder hearts of love and goodness, and gentleness—the hearts of old! — ah, dreamy life! — ah, dreamy, dreary, life!

But, to our business. The brow of this steep descent of road, upon which we have been standing, certainly commanded the most attractive view of our city. This is one eulogy for it. But every thing, in this imperfect world, has its advantages and its disadvantages; and we cannot praise our point of sight on another account. It was, in truth, a very uncomfortable spot to live upon, during the rougher seasons of the

year. No matter from what point of the compass the wind blew, whether from the gloomy south, hurrying along with it the black rack, sur-charged with vapour and rain; or from the boisterous north, whirling before it sleet, or hail, or frost; or from the pinching east, scattering the snow-flake; or from the south-west, sputtering forth a hurricane; it was all the same. Every blast was sure to avail itself of this passage into the town, and hence the place obtained the appellation of the Wind-gap; a name it still holds, and must retain, until the various currents of air cease to whistle, to howl, to puff and to bluster, from each nook and corner of the earth's atmosphere.

Uninviting, however, as the situation may appear, a range of thatched houses, stretched up and over the ascending road; and, at the time of which we speak, in greater numbers than even at the present day. Why very sensible people should have chosen

Wind-gap as an abode, we are not exactly aware. Perhaps they were willing to set off the salubrity of their air, during some parts of the year, against its roughness during others. However this may be, the inhabitants of Wind-gap were attached to their boisterous suburb; they even boasted that it conferred the rare gift of longevity; for if their blasts chilled, they also braced; and, indeed, the place could number more aged inhabitants than any other outlet, even of a city proverbial for "air without fog."

But the winter had now gone by; the spring too, had passed over, and midsummer was shedding its full effulgence on the good people of Wind-gap; and this latter is the time of the year at which we choose to make the reader better acquainted with the more important personages among them.

It was the eve of the twenty-fourth of

June, about fifty - five years ago. All Irish readers pretty well know that it has been the practice, time immemorial, of the humbler classes, to kindle, upon this night, bonfires throughout the country. We have read many learned discussions touching the origin of this custom; notwithstanding which, and contrary indeed to the nature of the theme, or at least, of its object, we have been left as much in the dark as ever. Whether the lighting of bonfires on St. John's Eve be a remnant of Pagan rites, by which our ancestors sacrificed to the palpable deity of the earth, the dispenser of light and heat; or whether it be a custom of more recent origin, we honestly admit, we cannot say; nor shall we pause to submit any grave and erring surmises on the matter; the people themselves, who are the actual incendiaries on those occasions, can give no rational account of the meaning of what they do.

The unexplained practice is, while we write, lamentably fallen into decay, like many similar and even more intelligible ones—but the bonfires of the twenty-third of June 1779, in and around our city, blazed merrily and in great numbers. To whatever point of the suburbs, or of the distant country, the citizen turned his glance; along the high road, or at the corner of cross roads, or in the bottoms of the remote valleys, or upon the bosoms of still more distant hills, columns of flame arose; and even in the streets of his town, the houses seemed red-hot, from the flaming upon them of vast fires, composed of furze, cows' horns, bones, tar-barrels, sugar-barrels, trunks or branches of trees, and all other combustibles that could not be called staple consumption for the thrifty domestic hearth of the place.

So, within and without, and far, far beyond our dear city, all was rejoicing glare; but to the honour of Wind-gap, be it re-

corded, the bonfire upon its height was brilliant beyond comparison; and honour, indeed, its inhabitants expected, and received, from the circumstance; a reflected glory proportioned to the magnificence of their conflagration. Many battles had been fought between "the boys of Wind-gap," (and the elderly men were termed boys, along with the rest,) and other boys of other outlets, for necessary materials. In all such rencounters, the former had been victors, dragging up with shouts of victory, to the top-most point of their high ground, abundance of every thing required for a bonfire of gigantic dimensions.

The long-wished-for evening fell. The pile was heaped, the brand was applied to it, and as its flames shot up, "even into the shkie," young and old, man and woman, maid and widow, boy and girl, and child of each sex, sent after it a cloud-cleaving shout of exultation.

At this crisis of the mystical festivity, a fellow, uncouthly swathed from his neck to his heels in twisted straw ropes, wearing a ridiculous mask, and wielding a stick, with a puffed bladder tied to its extremity, flapped and banged his way through the truly motley crowd with as much agility as his cumbrous clothing would permit; indeed he resembled a great half-tamed dancing bear. He was followed by another man of proportions as muscular as his own, fantastically dressed in female attire, also wearing a foolishly terrific mask, and armed in the same manner as his supposed protector. This absurd pair dashed through the shouting throng, dealing indiscriminately their blows on every head, which blows, like the words of a loudly babbling tongue, were more noisy than mischievous. The people, however, half of their own accord, ran here and there, pursued by their two grotesque sergeants at arms, until the active police of Wind-gap had ranged

them to their satisfaction. After a little time, order was restored and the proceedings of the night went forward with official regularity.

At one side, where a line of temporary benches covered with green sods had been erected for the occasion, sat the more aged portion of the men of Wind-gap. Squatted on the ground below them, were ranged, dressed in their best high-cawled caps, and holiday garments, the as elderly females of the principality. Half-a-dozen of sycamore chairs, placed near to the benches, were occupied by as many grey-headed, sage-looking and very old men; and opposite to those gathered the promiscuous group of every inferior age or degree (for age meant degree) of the dwellers of the place.

The foolish fellow armoured in straw, and the swaggering unfeminine would-be female, his companion, strided up and down, pummelling all who did not assume, at least,

attitudes and faces of the required gravity; at the same time that their own grotesque tricks abundantly caused the loud merriment they affected to discountenance. The glare of the bonfire shot in between the seated old men and women and the confronting throngs, so that the faces of all glowed like heated metal, while their backs remained in black shadow.

The mumming fool in straw approached the old men seated on the chairs, flourished his stick with its appendage, struck the latter against the ground, and attempted a few unwieldy movements. An aged man arose and came forward:—

"Neighbours all, both the ould and the young o'ye, listen to the words from my mouth. The fire is blazing for the midsummer; the eve of St. John's day is come round to us agin, praise be given above for the blessin' of another year; and we are behouldin' to choose a Mayor of Wind-gap,

for the year that's afore us. Fifteen midsummer nights are come and gone since the same man first had the Mayorship of rule and sway over us; and to this hour he has kept the pace an' the christian good-will inside our dours, and outside our thrasholds; quashing down scrimmages, and 'ructions, an' makin' a settlement of all our quarrels, an' keepin' us out of the law of the town below there, that might bring the **Meeroch* on us, if we had any thing to do with it. Honest neighbours, that hearken to me, my word goes for it, that a more honester or a more worshipfuller Mayor, nor Maurteen Maher, could'nt hould the sway on Wind-gap."

Like other reporters of popular oratory, we might have broken up this speech with many parenthetical cheers; for the spokesman and his subject are as much favourites

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* Ill-luck.

of ours as any other public speaker ever has been, in the eyes of our brethren. We think, however, that we have better managed, and that we now show more real art by keeping our whole volley of hurrahs for the close of the oration; and by declaring in strict truth, that the air was rent, after our friend sat down, with shouts of every calibre. The next instant Maurteen Maher was re-elected mayor, as popes are sometimes chosen, by acclamation.

Maurteen had been seated on one of the sycamore chairs before spoken of; he now stood up; the oldest man of the assembly, one indeed almost bent double with age, came to his side, and placed a long osier wand, peeled white, in his worship's right hand.

"Will you make promise before the neighbours to be the honest, fair judge among us, and to dale out the thrue justice on Wind-gap hill?" queried his ancient installer.

"I'll do my duty, like a thrue honest man," answered Maurteen Maher.

"Neighbours, do ye make promise to be loyal and dutiful to your mayor?" demanded the same aged person of the assembled crowd.

"Loyal and dutiful," shouted all.

"The chair, the chair!" was now the cry.

A large, two-armed, wicker chair was brought forward. To its sides were nailed loops of leather; through these, strong poles were put: with much gravity of manner, Maurteen Maher took his seat, clutching in his right hand his long wand of office, and in the other a huge nosegay. His subjects seized the poles, mounted them on their shoulders, and, preceded by a piper and a fiddler, the Mayor of Wind-gap was thrice borne round the bonfire, to which, during his progress, many faggots of furze, innumerable cows-horns, half the trunk of a goodly tree, and the entire skeleton of a horse, were added, for the purpose of conferring a kind

of glory upon his inauguration, as well as of exciting the new and excelling shouts which attested it.

The mayor's chair was then placed on a turfy eminence raised above the grassy bench before described; a foaming brown pitcher of home-brewed ale was handed to him; he quaffed it, wishing the "*shadhurth," to all around him; and then the vessel was passed on, of course after having been replenished, while each prayed a long reign for their newly and indeed curiously elected civic magistrate.

Maurteen Maher arose, and, amidst all this half farcical, half serious scene, profound silence ensued.

"It is in the knowledge of all o' ye, neighbours," said he, "that sence the first time ye made me Mayor of Wind-gap, 'tis my rule to chuse my council, that wid their

† Good health.

help, I may give good advice to ye, on hard points; and the same council that I called the first year o' my Mayorship, I'll call this present year; and so, Shawn Leeach, and Gregory Roche, take your places."

Shawn Leeach, the very old man who, as it may be said, had sworn in the Mayor, and Gregory Roche, one not much younger, very demurely took their stations, the one at his right hand, the other at his left.

"Shawn Leeach and Gregory Roche," continued Maurteen, "ye are the Mayor's council for the year to come; and no man is to gainsay our judgments, upon the peril of being put out of good fellowship with his neighbours. Come before my face, Meehawl O'Moore."

The hitherto merely foolish fellow, in the case of straw, waddled towards his worship's chair.

"Meehawl O'Moore, I put you in the post of the Mayor's bailiff; I give you the

power to disthrain and to make disthress, under the ordher of the Mayor's Coort of Wind-gap ;—are ye all content, and do ye know your own minds, this St. John's Eve—that Meehawl O'Moore should have this place over ye, by ordher o' the Coort ?"

It was curious that the boisterously inclined crowd wore really serious faces, while they affirmatively answered to this question.

"Well, then," rejoined Maurteen, "my hearty neighbours, let the dance go on, and the **Shannauchs* be tould, and let the good Sheebeen be dhrunk, till the fire burns down, and the †colloch's hour comes. Meehawl O'Moore keep the ring reg'lar; keep the gorsoons on their good beha'ver to the calleens; keep the *Sheebeen* rangin' its rounds in rason; let no one pass the gap widout payin' the ‡towl; if there's any unruly

* Agreeable gossip. † Old woman's hour.
‡ Toll;—toll for the bonfire.

doin's or pickin' of quarrels, or any undacent conduct, bring the offendher before me; and so, neighbours, *Sha-dhurth* to ye agin; and hearty and prosperous may we all be, man, woman, and child, ould and young, until St. John's eve comes round to us the next year."

The Mayor took another willing draught; new cheers were given at the close of his harangue; more faggots and other combustibles were thrown on the fire; the piper and the fiddler, preceded and followed by the "boys and girls," adjourned to an adjacent level spot, under the clamorous direction of Meehawl O'Moore; and the dance quickly commenced with all the life and vigour for which Irish "boys and girls" are so justly celebrated.

Maurteen Maher possessed his osier armchair in quiet dignity; his council placed their lesser chairs at his right and at his left; the other old men, and all the old

women, took their former stations; the *weenocks* sat in a ring round the blaze, and began plays suitable to their age; whilst over the whole Maurteen kept his eye of authority, ordaining order, encouraging amusement, talking "Shannachs;" occasionally tasting his sheebeen; commanding that the same beverage should moisten the piper's chanter, rosin the fiddler's bow, give to the dancers' feet spirit for their pastime, and—(superfluous injunction!) oil the well-practised tongues of the old women seated near his chair.

We end the chapter by insinuating that this local and absurd practise of electing a "Mayor of Wind-gap," is only taken from the traditional authority of the place, (which however must not be questioned) and can by no means apply generally to the peculiarities of the Irish people.

CHAPTER III.

MAURTEEN MAHER was a man between fifty and sixty; an old bachelor, and otherwise unburthened with family cares. During his whole life he had never devoted himself to any regular occupation, and yet he was decently independent by his cleverness in many ways. He could weave baskets, and *skeechs* and *kishes;* he cultivated a small garden of osiers, to supply him with materials for this branch of his handy-craft; the shee-

been, brewed from malt of his drying, had a peculiar and highly-relished flavour; he was an eminent ornamental thatcher; he could mend shoes, make fishing-nets, and fishing-flies and lines, and do an odd job as a carpenter; he could turn wooden trenchers, *thurgeens*, or *caulcannon-pounders, and such household furniture; and he professed many other branches of artisan accomplishments.

Yet to none of his avocations would he continuously or diligently devote himself; he took up all by fits and starts, and would often abandon them altogether, when the spring-breeze invited him to the river-side, to pursue his favourite recreation of angling. Of this sport he was passionately fond; and in the successful pursuit of it, not one of his fishing brethren, who frequented the banks of the clear stream, which flowed

* A mess of potatoes and other vegetables.

through the valley, beneath his hill, could compete with Maurteen. His varied talents necessarily claimed respect, and Maurteen himself was by no means backward in assuming among his compeers an air of self-importance, proportioned to their admissions of his superiority. He possessed, however, a shrewd understanding, and, as the neighbours said, had "dacent manners and a handy tongue in his head." Such had been his admitted character from youth to manhood. As he advanced in years, he became still more looked up to. On all knotty points his opinion was consulted, and gradually became decisive of the matter at issue. This homage half spoiled Maurteen; a real dictator-ship of manner grew upon him. He claimed the foremost place in all discussions, no matter upon what subject; domestic, as regarded Wind-gap, or foreign as regarded "the town below," and which he was pleased to consider as a mere appendage to his own

dominions. Sometimes, his loud and oracular delivery of himself became ridiculed, but he looked superciliously on the scoffers, and turned his back on them, as quite unworthy of notice.

Maurteen monopolised, among other things, the management of bonfires, of May-bushes, of May-poles, and of all such illustrations of periodical festivities. Once, upon a St. John's eve, while the bonfire blazed brightly, partly as a frolic of the moment, and partly as a real acknowledgment of his great talents and efficient services, the "boys of the place" took him upon their shoulders, pranced under him round it, and appointed him to the mock office of Mayor. But Maurteen Maher's face was the only one which wore no smile on the occasion; and it was soon perceived that he took the freak more seriously than it had been intended.

His people were surprised to find; that

after this night, he poked himself more actively than ever into all their disputes and slightest differences; arrogating, by virtue of his recent appointment, the exclusive right of deciding between them. And at first they indulged the usurpation "for the fun of the joke," at the same time being obliged to admit that Maurteen's verdicts often saved them from law-suits in the town, and from internal feuds and bickerings. At the next bonfire, (but now as much by matter of course as to renew the frolic) he was re-installed in office;—and for this occasion, his own hands had constructed an awful-looking wicker chair—the same in which, fifteen years after its manufacture, we have just seen him paraded round the fire. And it was now that he called upon the two most intelligent men of his neighbourhood to assist him with their advice in the dispensation of his authority, and these he styled "the Mayor's council." He also ap-

pointed a bailiff to carry his and their decrees into effect; and thenceforward, without a sneer, or a witticism against him, even from the most witty, or the most sneering, Maurteen Maher obtained power, and preserved peace and good-will among his subjects. If a debt were owing from one to another, he arranged the time and manner of its payment; if the boundaries of a garden were disputed between two neighbours, a matter frequently occurring on an almost unclaimed common, where no fences, nor other lines of partition, had previously been established, he called in "his council;" with them viewed the premises, and pointed out to each claimant his decreed portion. If trespass were committed by swine or cattle, he assessed the damages perpetrated—and all his judgments were at last acceded to, not only submissively, but pleasureably; the good people of Wind-gap agreeing among themselves that a man of clearer

intellect, of more superior genius, or of more impartial justice, could not preside over their affairs; and it became a matter of course that his decisions were implicitly obeyed, much to the diminution of the fees of the real Mayor's office, legally established in the city about half-a-mile distant.

If fines or debts were to be recovered under his authority, and that payment was not forthcoming, he never failed to exact it. Meehaul O'Moore, his bailiff, was a ranting, rattling, laughing fellow, who obeyed the Mayor's orders for the joke' sake, careless of consequences. He would seize on some piece of household furniture, and carry it to his Worship the Mayor, who retained it until it was redeemed. And another thing may have confirmed Maurteen in his authority: namely, that the whole community which he thus usurpingly governed, felt and acknowledged his general utility, in handy-craft pursuits, much too convincingly, each

in his own bosom, to offend even a public tyrant, if such Maurteen Maher could have been, at the risk of getting rid of the advantages resulting from his individual talents.

His worship had shewn good discrimination in the choice of his council; Gregory Roche was the weaver of Wind-gap. Fifty-six years ago, the woman who neglected to commence the manufacture of the linen of her own household would have been deemed an unthrifty person. In every dwelling the buzz of the spinning-wheel was heard during the long winter-nights; and it was the companion of the *vanithee* in the open air, outside the door, on a summer's evening. The weaver was therefore kept in good and respectable employment, and could live rather aristocratically. But, along with the consideration due to him, as an expert and cunning artist, Gregory Roche commanded deference as a man of superior manners and acquirements. He had read books, and was

considered oracular on all grand historic points. Polemic literature he had also studied—we rather fear, however, only on one side; but he could relate "how King Harry had set up the Protestant religion—becase the Pope of Room, (the Heavens be his bed!)—put his face totally 'agin the notion of letting the baste have more nor five wives at a turn"—and he would add with a knowing wink—"that the one o' them was one too many." It was clear, according to Gregory's Church History, that "becase the bould King Henry the Aigth was a skhandle to christian people, in regard o' the famale women, he gave to the sort o' clargy livin' in his time, ache a wife a-piece, and maybe sometimes more, according to his own fancy, just that they should'nt be bringing himself over the coals for his own doin's." While pointing to the ruined monasteries of which we have elsewhere spoken, in the town under his residence, Gregory

Roche could speak, whether truly, or romancingly, we know not, of the different orders of regular brethren who once inhabited them—(after having built them by the way), in their full glory; and he could expatiate on their former palmy state, compared with their present unheeded decay. Gregory's person was neat, and spruce, arrayed in snuff-coloured broad-cloth, a wig of three buckles, a well-brushed, three-cocked hat, and square-toed brogues. On all occasions, when the Mayor of Wind-gap sat recognized in full office, in his grand wicker chair, Gregory sat at his left hand; and it is worth adding, that he was the collector of "the dues" of the Priest of his parish, as well as the Mayor's treasurer for whatever resulted from importunately assailing, in the persons of hundreds of ragged deputies, all passengers going and coming along the Wind-gap road, for contributions to the anniversaries of St. John's eve, May-day, and so forth.

The man sitting upon his Worship's right hand, was, as has been said, the most aged man in the parish ; the oldest of his neighbours, under him, scarcely remembered him with any other but a grey head ; at present that head was white as snow, and his venerable hairs fell in great profusion on his shoulders. Hence the people called him Shawn Leeach, that is Grey Jack, although he had been christened John Morrison.—His years were said to be one hundred and ten, yet his intellect was strong, and his memory unfaded. He took great pride in walking to Mass on Sundays, the wrist of one hand clasped by the fingers of the other, and both resting upon the small of his back, accompanied by a great-grandson and two of his children, and a great-grand-daughter, of marriageable years. The image suggested to us by the appearance of this group has, we fear, often been used ; yet we will venture to say that, to a poetic mind, our

old friend and his companions might give the idea of blooming Spring, mature Summer, with its fruit, and hoary winter, for the once in company.

CHAPTER V.

After having delivered the good humoured injunctions we have last reported of him, Maurteen Maher sat in state, his council at either hand. His upper house (we take the liberty so to denominate all the remaining old men of Wind-gap) collected around him; and his lower house, in the persons of the ancient dames of his realm, squatted on the ground before him; and, however wide may appear the distinctions between these

humble assemblies and those of the estates of the nation, yet was there some degree of similarity. It is needless to observe that Maurteen Maher, such as we have sketched his character, may answer sufficiently well to shadow forth some royal personage; compared with their contemporaries of the other sex, the old men were sententious and grave and imposing, and properly alive to the superiority of their nature, and should therefore be classed as the aristocracy of Wind-gap; and as for the old women, they so far resembled "the people's house," that, whatever they lacked of the hereditary sapience, the dignified demeanour, and the natural station claimed by the lords of the creation, they made up for, by an infinite disproportion of incessant gabble.

All these good folk sat fully within the influence of the bonfire's blaze; and while the boys and girls danced merrily away at some distance, the note of the music which

set them capering came pleasantly to the ears of the old people. It should be noticed that, contrary to the usage in higher quarters, king, lords, and commons, sat within speaking distance of each other; all mingling in general shannauchs, except when two or three individuals chose to have a bye-word. Nay, they quaffed their sheebeen in common; the same mug being sent from the throne to the lords, and from the lords to the commons, also, whenever the ancient throats of the last-named assembly became thirsty from smoking their pipes, or their tongues parched from clacking.

"What **pishe-rogue* story takes the rounds among ye, †*shanav granvh?*" asked his worship the mayor, addressing, in a condescending jocularity of tone, the seated matrons before him—"by the wagging of them heads

* Pishe-rogue, a tale of the supernatural.

† Shanav-granvh, old women.

of yours, and the long faces you're shaking at one another, I've a notion the discourse is runnin' on **Poochas*, or on some *Duowls* tricks of a stormy night."

"Merry Easther to me, Mayor of Wind-gap," replied one of the dames, "but tisn't you I'd fancy to have for masther of my house; oh no—; och, by no manes, *a roon*; why, a poor woman couldn't blink her eye but you'd be at the bottom of the story."—

"And if I was goin' to make an †*own-shuck* of myself, on that head, tisn't very clear to me I'd be troublesome to you, at all, Bridogue Mooney; I'd get a young colleen to comb my grey head, as the song says."—

"There is such combs as three-legged stools, to be found among the household furniture," smiled Gregory Roche.

"And the colleen that would take wid

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* Fairies. † Fool.

you would be at her last senses, though ye *are* the mayor itself," retorted Bridogue, "and she'd often be axing why you hadn't the *misnoch** to thry your hand when you were worth the having; though, to spake the honest truth, I believe that time is beyant your own recollection, asthore."

"Och, Bridge, that was'nt always your mind; do you lose the thought of auld times? but there's no use either in fretting or in telling on you; what's to happen will happen; and I say, with a hearty good will, much good may do the man that made his own o' ye!—but ye're not sayin' amin to me, Ned Mooney?"—he suddenly asked of Bridogue's mate who sat near him. Ned expressively and waggishly shook his old pate, turned up his eyes, took the *dudeen*† from between his teeth, and answered "Och! I was a blessed bargain to her, praise be to God!—

* Luck. † Short pipe.

and having said this, he replaced his *dudeen*, and tightened his teeth and squeezed his lips on it.

"But what would ye all do, only that I'm a bachelor boy?" continued the mayor, "and have no wife, like a mill-stone round my neck, to keep me from minding your concarns: is'nt it well for ye that I happen to hould the same belief wid the crature in the cart, as ye all know, 'tis in the ballad,"—and the mayor sang forth:

"There was a victim in a cart
 A goin' to be hanged;
When his reprief came from the King
 The cart and crowd did stand:
But he must either take a wife
 Or be content to die.
"Och! why, then, should I keep my life?"
 The victim did reply:
"There's people here from every place,
 Why should I spile their sport?
The bargain's hard in either case—
 But come! drive on the cart."—

To this not very elegant version of a not very original witticism, there was the contribution of what the author of "The Man of Refinement" considers a vulgar evidence of the feelings of human nature; namely, a laugh; accompanied by what is deemed not out of the way, in the boxes of the Italian Opera, namely, clapping of hands.

"Bridogue," resumed the mayor, "ye know ye were a comely crature, in the time we spake of, and used to dance, "cover the buckle," so as to take the light out of my eyes; and ye know, more betoken, that it's not my own fault that I'm a lone man, but because Ned Mooney was a claner boy; howsomever, as I said afore, or something like it, a pottle of frettin' doesn't sell for a groat."

Ned Mooney puffed forth a volume of smoke, which he had been inhaling during the mayor's last speech, and half laughed and half whispered, into his sovereign's ear,

" Mostha! bud ye were born with a silver spoon in ye're mouth to be quit of her!"

"Well, Bridogue," the mayor went on, "tell us what ye'were colloguing about; for our own discourse here is reeled off to the bare spindle."

"When ye said we were tellin' of duowl's doin's, Mayor of Wind-gap," answered Bridogue, "the guess ye made was almost the right one; we war talkin' about The Strange Man o' the Inch," she added in a low confidential and now serious voice, to which all who heard her, except Maurteen, responded with looks of almost frightened attention.

"And if I did'nt care much what I was sayin', I'd lay a wager you were givin' him a nice purty character?" smiled the mayor, with seeming indifference.

"Och! in honest truth, a good name is a bright jewel," remarked Bridge, unconsciously half quoting Shakespear, "and 't would be the same pity to cock it up in the cap of

the strange man o' the Inch; and for the best o' rasons in the world, because he never cared for it, his own self."

"And what's ye're own notion about him, a-vanithee?"

"Sence ye have the likin' to hear to it, I'll rehearse it for you, what our notion is. We were a sayin' that, if ever there was a cloven-hoofed duowl, that pawned himself on people for a dacent-looking man—(though he *has* a little halt in his gait, too,)—and sich things happen oftentimes, they say—the sthrange man o' the Inch is just that sort of a body."

"'Twas well I did'nt pass my word for your civility to him, Bridogue."

"Och ay; and we were sayin' no more nor what his doin's give the warrant for; and there's more nor that; I'll make my words good agin him, or I'll give you lave and license to say I hav'nt such a thing at all or a tongue behind my teeth."

"Whatever way the story turns up, the mayor won't say that o' ye, any how," remarked the experienced Ned Mooney; "for if he took his oath of it on the mass book, there's another one livin' in Wind-gap could tell him what would give him his doubts, for all that."

"My speech is to pleasure the mayor, Ned Mooney."

"Faith, and sure I don't begrudge it to him; there will be enough left for us all."—Ned Mooney was a laughing philosopher, and jested with his misfortunes.

"Well, Bridogue," resumed the mayor, "we are longin' to know the rason why ye put hoofs on the strange man o' the Inch?"

Bridogue pulled down, with a sudden jerk, her petticoats over her shins; tucked all her clothes under her; shifted her position till she was poised to her satisfaction; stretched her hands towards the blaze and rubbed them well together; and smacked her lips,

and protruded her chin towards the mayor. Amongst her sister dames, similar movements were made to fix themselves confortably and lastingly in their sitting positions; most of the old men rested their chins upon their sticks, and bent themselves towards her, half smiling, yet staring inquisitively; the pipes of male and female were hastily replenished and vigorously relighted, as if to lay in sea-storage for a long and important voyage of gossip; and Bridogue then went on with her shannauchs.

"Isn't it a thing known to every one hearkinin' to me, that ever sence the doin's that happened there, down at the Inch, now more nor twenty years a gone, no crature, that was a livin' christhen at all, would go to live in that oold house;—becase the sperrit o' the lady that died in it, and the sperrit o' the young man, through whose manes the life left her, goes thrampaging through the rooms, by night; screeching

and sthruggling most frightful for to hear. Isn't that thrue for me, I'd be glad to larn?"

This question, though put generally, was, after a pause, replied to only by Gregory Roche. "I b'lieve," he said, "there's no one you might ask about that house could tell ye more of it nor our mayor his own self."

"To be sure I could say something of it," observed the mayor, with a half laughing, unsuperstitious, superior kind of expression, "but I'll keep my knowledge to myself, Gregory Roche; and in the main time, for the rason that you are not tongue-tied, ye can tell the neighbours what happened to us both, the night we went to the Inch."

"I often tould all that came to my knowing about that night; so that 'twould be no story to any one," answered Gregory; and this was literally true; there were none present who had not heard of the visit paid by the mayor and his younger council to the abominated house of the Inch; and yet

such is the love of the marvellous, among people who purposely set themselves down to listen to a recital of it, that every voice cried out either that the circumstance had not been fully related, or that it had been quite forgotten: and an *encore* was loudly called for. A first singer could not have been more obliged than was Gregory Roche for the request made of him.

"Well, neighbours, well; 'twould'nt be a mannerly turn to say the No to ye, and so spile the discourse, when we are all sociable together of a St. John's eve. There's never a one here that's not ould enough to bring to mind when the house at the Inch was shut up, and the rason why its dours and windows were all boulted and barred."

"Och! and sure we do remember it well," interrupted Bridogue Mooney, snatching the narrative from Gregory's mouth, with as much eagerness as a starving dog might seize a bone from the jaws of another;

"myself has the whole story on the tip o' my tongue."

"Then tell it, Bridogue, in St. John's name," said the Mayor,—"you'll sleep the asier for it, and poor Ned will pass the night quieter; besides, you're so handy at the speech, Bridogue, that ye'll be at the end of your journey before Gregory could get to the first turnpike."

Bridogue gave her person a pert move, while Gregory smiled; but at the bottom of his appearance of complaisance, there was a gravelly sediment. The *raconteuse* started forward on her narrative, with an avidity that fully bore out the Mayor's assertion of her professional capacity; and taking the liberty to recur to our elegant simile of the rifled bone, her haste was doubled, at once to satisfy her own appetite, and prevent the possibility of a reprisal. Yet, first-rate as was esteemed Bridogue's gossipping talent, she committed, to our taste, so many

digressions from the main point—such a scaling of the genealogical tree of every creature mentioned in her *Shannauchs*—that we will endeavour to condense her matter, according to our own notions of the requisite compactness of story-telling.

The garrulous old body has fixed the period of her tale at twenty-one years, or thereabouts, previous to the time of its relation. At that epoch it was known to "all the world [the world of Wind-gap we presume she meant], that ould Harry Stokesbury," the proprietor of the house at the Inch, and of considerable property beside, "had been as wicked a sinner in his time as ever broke the commandments,"—that is, he had led a self-indulging, irregular life. It was equally well known that, like all *roués*, he had been an unreasoning tyrant to his family; and that when, from the inroads made on his constitution by excesses, as well as by years, he became no longer

able to pursue his former courses, he continued just as intolerant at home, as if he had been a voluntary ascetic.

To his only son, the "young Harry Stokesbury," now a man, in the prime of youthful vigour, and who shewed every propensity to follow the example given him by his sire, he was, with a most ungenerous want of sympathy, particularly severe and oppressive; fuming, and cursing, and raving at his imitator's follies and crimes. But the younger Harry, laughing at the idea that his father, the most thorough-going rake of his own day, should turn moralist upon him, merely in spite that his descendant could eclipse him, took little heed of the parental lectures thus lavished upon him; in fact, it was visible to every one that Henry the second had resolved to prove himself "a chip of the old block," whatever the old block itself might choose to think about the matter. But the "ould fellow" began to

keep a firmer gripe of his money than he had hitherto done: "Like the dog in the manger," thought his son, "he can't use it himself, and won't give it to those who can." Young Stokesbury soon wanted, in fact, the means of pursuing what he called his pleasures; in consequence of unsatisfactory payments, people began to refuse him new credit, and to become troublesome to him about old scores. He sent them all to his father (after first sending them all to the devil,—"and there's little in the difference" remarked young Harry to himself). "Ould Harry" ordered them, however, to be chased off his premises; and some, who insisted strongly on their claims, were compelled, in consequence, to fight their way to the high-road, through two or three house-dogs, and four or five servants—glad to escape without very material personal injury.

"The young fellow" inherited his father's passionate temper, as well as his taste for

pleasant pursuits; it was well known, indeed, that, in the first-mentioned instance, he even excelled his prototype; his torrent-like nature becoming quite turbulent and destructive when attempted to be curbed in its career. He demanded money from "the ould fellow," but not only got none, but was met with showers of oaths and vituperation. "The young fellow" recriminated as well as he knew how: and at the scenes of altercation which took place between them, and at the sound of their maniac voices, rising high in mutual and unbridled passion, every soul under the same roof with them shuddered.

"Well," (and here the reader must imagine Bridogue piquantly smacking her lips) "the young fellow" seized whatever he could lay hands upon, either in the shape of money, or of articles convertible into money, and rioted away as long as the supplies, so gained, lasted; but long they did

not last; and he was again in necessity; and another fearful contention took place between him and his unhappy parent; and another; and many others; (Bridogue's manner of relating these facts was solemn) until at their last interview, the father struck the son, and the son raised his sinewy arm, and felled his father to his foot; and from that day, until he got an unchristian grave under the waters of the sea, a curse fell upon and followed young Harry Stokesbury; nor did the listeners of Wind-gap see any thing extraordinary in this fact; for, to their primitive hearts, it seemed an immeasurable sin, that, even with provocation, the child should commit outrage on the person of the father.

It was reported at the time, as Bridogue asserted, that "the young fellow," after having fled the house, to escape death at the hands of his father, who, in his rage, armed himself with a weapon to inflict it, became very

sorry for his abominable act; and, when he had cooled, was penitent, and did all in his power to make peace at home. But "the ould fellow" would never set his eyes upon him; and at his dying hour left him nothing but his curse.

Still, according to our narrator, and indeed, the general credence of the country, the young man was as much to be pitied as blamed. To be sure, no one could help calling him wild, and wayward, and passionate; nor was it any very great wonder that he felt inclined to tread in the paths that had been well beaten for him by his father; yet, many good christians said that he was affectionate and generous, and Bridge insisted that to those below him, who wanted and claimed his assistance, he had shewn a liberality so extreme, that it almost atoned, in the world's eye, for his youthful indiscretions: she particularly instanced the following case.

While yet but a boy, he discovered a near relation of his deceased mother in the most abject distress. This person he instantly snatched from penury, called him his brother, and, at his intercession, the elder Stokesbury consented to receive the new comer as an inmate of his family. The lad was educated along with young Harry; ate with him; was clothed as well; sported with him; in fact, was treated, in every respect, as a brother, indeed.

The characters and even appearance and manners of the two youths were very dissimilar. Young Harry was a strong-featured, yet fine-featured, boy, with superabundant spirit; his poor cousin, so cherished, was as handsome, but mild looking, and with the expression of even a want of spirit upon his countenance; yet, Harry seemed to love him better because of this contrariety; it made him more positively the protector and patron of his timid relation.

"But smooth water runs deep, and the duowl lies at the bottom of it," was Bridogue's sage commentary on this soft seeming individual. Young Henry Stokesbury soon experienced cause to repent that he had ever rescued the lad from starvation. Old Stokesbury had under his roof a ward, an interesting young girl. Her dower, when she arrived at a disposeable age, was to be a large one, and her father had willed that she should espouse her guardian's son, on the promise that the guardian consented to the match. It was said that the young man loved most enthusiastically his betrothed bride; and no wonder that he should; for she was generally allowed to be beautiful; and, like the lamb, even too mild and gentle: the very opposite indeed, as was his cousin, to her intended husband.

Shortly after the deadly feud with his father, young Harry left his native place, and went, no one knew whither. Three

months after, his detesting parent died. It was generally supposed that, notwithstanding his father's will, and even curse, the disinherited heir would immediately return home to survey his chances of fortune. But, twelve months elapsed before Harry's re-appearance at the house of Inch, and then his visit was known by its consequences.

During his absence, it had become whispered about that the person whom, from early boyhood, he had cherished, had behaved most foully and treacherously to him; that he had inherited young Harry's paternal property; and that, for the accomplishment of his views, he had kept up the father's rage against the son, and that, therefore, the old man's curse had been his only legacy to his only child; but, worse than all this, rumour now told that the traitor was, at Harry's return, the husband of the beautiful and wealthy ward of Old Stokesbury.

As evidence to a jury, perhaps there

might have been nothing certainly proved on these points, but appearances bore out suspicions. The usurper lived in the Inch-House, and the fair young girl lived there with him, and the closest observers could only conclude that they were man and wife.

Upon a dark night, the house was attacked by a band of armed men, broken into, and at once given up to pillage. Harry Stokesbury's treacherous cousin fell, covered with wounds, inflicted by Harry's own avenging hand, near to the bed, on which lay his faithless mistress—a shrieking witness of this, perhaps, rightful retribution. The general story went, that she had become a mother only a few days before, and that, when the terrible young Harry, after his sanguinary deed, turned to her to reproach her with her infidelity, he found that, with her last, long scream, her young spirit had passed away.

While yet grimly standing over the bleeding and senseless victim of his revenge, he was seized upon and conveyed to prison. The authorities of the neighbouring town had received private intimation of the intended attack on the house at the Inch, and, although they had been too officially precautious, or perhaps lazy, to anticipate it, they at last sent overpowering numbers, to ensure to the law vengeance upon the law's aggressors.

The now only living Harry Stokesbury, arrested on the very scene of his crime, was tried at the bar of justice, and condemned to death. Yet, tremendous as had been the result of his rage, the provocations to it, according to general report, were mercifully taken into account, and eventually, he was only transported from his country;—transported from it, as soon appeared, never to reach the shores of another; for authentic intelligence reached Ireland that the ves-

sel in which he sailed, had foundered in open sea, and that all on board had perished.

Although, as the savage youth stood over the stiffening body of his relation, he had thought him dead, his victim lived on; and after twenty years and upwards, still continued to be a breathing man, upon the very evening of Bridogue's narrative; "lading, to be sure," added Bridogue, "a very quiet life, in the town at our feet—but who can forget, for all that, his airly villainy?"

CHAPTER IV

The house at the Inch, thus marked by the assertions of Bridogue, and the assent of her neighbours, who, by the way, were the nearest populous community to it, as the scene of a hideous tragedy, had indeed been shut up and unoccupied for many years, until within the last three months, when it was taken by the object of the old woman's present animadversions. Bridogue closed her story with this remark :—

"An' its a thruth, afore ye all, that no right body would ever venter to go live in such a place, where the sperrits of Harry Stokesbury and the young woman, that died there, haunt the place the whole night long; an' if 'twas a thing," she added, "that the house at the Inch had never been a place of ill luck, or *Meeroch*, both the one and the other, were in it now, for it covered the head of the wickedest man the world ever gave birth to; not barrin' ould Harry Stokesbury, or even young Harry himself."

We have before surmised that all the assembled sages of Wind-gap, male and female, were well acquainted, previous to this night with the story of Harry Stokesbury; but Bridogue was peculiarly remarkable for her powers of newly aranging and combining the incidents of a tale, no matter how often she repeated it; so that, even prolix as she had proved in the present

instance, none of her auditors seemed fatigued; on the contrary, throughout her narrative, and most emphatically at its conclusion, the old dame was greeted with various exclamations, of wonder, pleasure and applause; all which testimonies of her talents she accepted as matters of course.

One only of her auditors wore a face of indifference, on the occasion, and even ostentatiously displayed it; and this was Ned Mooney, the good dame's spouse, who quietly contented himself with ejaculating, "Thanks be to the blessed St. John, she has done!" It need not be observed, that this circumstance went most bitterly to Bridogue's heart; want of interest in any one is certainly the keenest offence the story-teller can receive; what must it be, when it comes from one's own husband?

Different remarks circulated among the old people, upon the matter under discussion; until at length it was recollected that

Gregory Roche had been interrupted in his modest attempt, to relate an anecdote, connected with the house at the Inch; and he was now requested, by all, to resume. It was not, however, an easy matter to prevail on the weaver of Wind-gap to take up the snapped threads of his intellectual loom; another artist had been publicly preferred to himself. But the Mayor knew the weak point of the man, and whispered him, that what had occurred, was only according to "good manners;" that, merely through gallantry, women must have their way, all the world over; that he was assured, Gregory Roche, whom everybody regarded, as the "patthern of Wind-gap, in regard of mannerly conduct," would not, for the first time in his life, be forgetful of "dacent behaver." Gregory was conciliated; and, when all were again fixed in attitudes of attention, the "patthern of Wind-gap," began his anecdote.

"All that the plasing vanithee, Misthress Mooney by name, tould to ye, neighbours, was a thrue story, and well reharsed over. Everybody said, after the house at the Inch was shet up, that sthrange cries used to be hard there in the night time, and sthrange lights seen in the upper windies. Misthress Mooney related for you that 'tis more nor twenty years sence the young woman died there; by coorse of nature, the Mayor of Wind-gap and myself were younger people that day than we are now at the present time, forenent ye; we had no Mayor at all over us then, more be token; Maurteen Maher was only Maurteen Maher, in them days. Well; Maurteen brought me down by the river side a-fishing, of a very fine evening, moreover, that would tempt any one to take a slope to himself by the green bank, where the flowers were blooming to the eye sight. Ye all know, neighbours, that the house at the Inch is near to the wather's side. We were a com-

ming our way home, and now and then we stopped in our discoorse, and turned our looks to the house, for we bethought ourselves of the story that was going ; it was a good two hours after the night-fall.

"Says Maurteen Maher, to me, (remember he was only Maurteen Maher at that time neighbours, or I'd call him the mayor, to be mannerly)—'Gregory,' says he to me, 'as sure as the fishing-rod is in my hand, I see light in the top windy of the place'—and neighbours all, I looked myself, and light there was. We held our tongues for a while, like people sthruck with amaze; till at last, says Maurteen to me agin, 'Gregory, I'll see what's in the house, if 'twas the Duowl runnin' with his lantern through it ; will you come with me?'

"No, Maurteen, no, I made answer to him ; the heavens be our safeguard, we shouldn't meddle or make with things of that sort.

"'Come near to the house, Gregory Roche,'" Maurteen said to me. Myself demurred, good neighbours; myself demurred to Maurteen Maher; but he took me by the arm, and by main force brought me with him; for he was a sthronger boy nor I was.

"We got very near to the house; the light of the windies blazed brighter and brighter; and we hard, aye, as positive sure as I'm a livin' sowl, this St. John's eve, and as sure as the saint's good fire is burnin' before me, and as sure as ye are all hearkenin' to me, we hard a pitiful, doleful screech, that stopt us as if we were shot; 'twas like the screech of a woman in her sorest throuble; neighbours, neighbours, it was; only more dolefuller, by far, by far."

Gregory Roche here paused. It was not without intention that, with due solemnity of voice, shaking of his head, and impressive mysteriousness of visage, he had managed to bring his story to a certain pitch of in-

terest. To measure the success of his art, therefore, Gregory paused; and anon he grew pleased with his observations; the usual marks of deep sympathy with the narrator were fully displayed. Towards Maurteen Maher indeed, Gregory did not venture to direct his eye; for, as he had sometimes experienced before, he feared to find on the mayor's lip a half waggish smile; nor would he have been at present disappointed in his apprehensions; tho' perhaps his worship was only amused with his council's rhetorical decorations.

"Neighbours, neighbours," resumed Gregory, not yet quite satisfied with the strong impression he had made; "Maurteen Maher that was, and the mayor that is, will bear me out in what I say; it was indeed, it was a very mournful screech we heard."

"You're tellin' the story mighty well, Gregory Roche," said the mayor, "'twas plain to know that a livin' christhin couldn't

baul out that way, through his teeth, if they made a King of England of him."

"No, neighbours, no; not a livin' christhin sowl would screech that a way.

"'Come into the house, Gregory Roche,'" says Maurteen Maher, to myself, very wickedly.

"Into the house is it, Maurteen Maher?" —I made answer to him; and I shook my finger at him, the way I now shake it, neighbours; I did—I shook my finger at him.

"No, Maurteen Maher, says I, I will not darken the door-stone of that house; 'tis no place for honest, livin' people, says I to him.

"'I'll go by myself then,'" says Maurteen Maher, pushing me away from him. Didn't ye push me from you, Mayor of Windgap, that was Maurteen Maher then? didn't you?"

"I did in good troth," answered his worship, smiling quietly.

"Take my advice, says I to him, and I shook my finger at him again; take my counsel and don't enter there; lave the dead to their doom; to their doom, says I. 'I will go in, says Maurteen Maher, over again.' Neighbours, I was the image of one thunder-struck, by rason of his bouldness: there was no fear upon him: 'here is the fish and the fishing-rod,' says he, to myself—'it would be a pity to have them good throuts lost;' aye, indeed neighbours, all he seemed to think about was the losin' of the throuts. 'If they brake my bones, and that I can't come back to you,' says Maurteen, 'If I *don't* come back to you, in an hour's time, go home, Gregory Roche; go your ways home, and send the throuts to Mr. Kelsham at the gazebo; I promised them to him, and, dead or alive, I'll keep my word; send them to him, Gregory Roche, and make sale of this fishing-rod, and of every thing you'll find in my house, and give the money to the poor, for the good o' my soul.'

"I was amazed beyant the world, neighbours; I was like unto a body turned into a pillar of salt, after a manner; and while I was in this sort o' way, Maurteen Maher left me. He staid away near to an hour; and he came back with a sarious face, I'll pledge myself to ye, but what he seen he never tould of."

"Would ye have my face turn round to my back, Gregory, or would ye have me be withered into a * sthagown for letting my tongue run away with my brains?"

Gregory Roche was fully satisfied at perceiving that his contribution to the wonders of the night was well received, quite as well, indeed, as the more lengthened one of Bridogue Mooney, and therefore it did not come into his head to reply to the mayor's last observation. Many comments and surmises followed, which we will pass over, only noticing the more material topics.

* Sthagown, a frost-bitten potatoe.

"It was a thrue remark for Bridge Mooney to make," said a woman with a palsied head, every shake of which threw a very effective hiatus into her speech, "'tis mighty thrue for Bridogue Mooney to say that no right body would go to live in such a house as the house at the Inch."

"Right body, inagh!" cried Bridge, smartly, "He's no right body, as sure as I'm an auld sinner, he is not. I'm tould he's mighty ill-favoured to look on, and elderly into the bargain; and if he hadn't witchcraft on his side, is it to be believed that an auld ugly offender of a man, 'ud be able to over persuade so many young creatures?"

"I believe, beyant any doubt," observed one of the old men of the company, "that such sin and shkandle was never known to happen in a neighbourhood as fell upon the counthry round the Inch house, since the sthrange man came to live there."

"There was never the like known in the

world wide," answered Bridogue—"and if he was a sightly young blade, that'ud be plasing to the eye, and carried a coaxin' smile upon the lips, and had a sugary tongue in his head, there wouldn't be half the surprise; but take my word over again for it, it's by witchcraft, and witchcraft alone, he comes round them. 'Isn't Nelly Darcy, the smith's daughter, ashamed to shew her head? isn't there Doran's crature of a colleen, not over sixteen years auld, turned from the door by her own father and mother? and isn't there Mahony's wife, that wint by the name of purty Peggy, afore Tim Mahony brought her home.—(Tim Mahony ye know, keeps the sign of the "Tumblers" at the cross roads, beyant the Inch house) and wasn't she sent to her father, by rason of her husband's displeasure? and ochone! ochone!" continued Bridge pathetically, "the shkandle is brought on us all, on account of the unsightly auld man o' the Inch! I tell ye, onst for all, he gives draughts to us all, some way or other."

"There's such things done of a certain," said auld Daddy Leeach, "every body can spake of what the *shoolin' Bacchos* * brings upon young cratures, by manes of bewitched pins, and heribs, and dhrinks, sweet and plasing to the mouth, though bitter for the heart, and bad for the poor sowl; and I knew in my time, sthrange things to be used for the makin' of the love draughts. They say that the young ones of them † *faulhogues* that flies through the air from the morning till the night, taken from the nest afore their feathers grows, and the nest they're found in taken at the same time—they say that if the bird, and nest, and all is biled up together for the wicked purpose, the broth it makes will force a girl to run after a boy, or a boy to run after a girl, for the mere love, the world over."

"Is it the swallows ye made mention of, Shawn Leeach," asked another very old man near him.

* Wandering beggars. † Swallows.

"Aye, in good thruth, Meehawl — 'twas about them swallows, the youngest of 'em, I mane, that I made mention."

"And faiks," resumed Meehowl, "the rason I put the question to ye, on that head, is this; very airly of a hazy morning, I was passin' by the house at the Inch—the Lord stand between us and all harm," and here the narrator piously crossed himself: "when what should I see, lookin' towards the house, but the sthrange man himself, standin' outside of a windy, and he was pullin' down a swallow's nest."

"And ye seen him doin' that, Meehowl? then its likely enough that Bridogue Mooney is right in her sayin'."

"I'll stand up for my sayin'," replied Bridge Mooney, "he puts the charms on us, howsomever he finds manes to do it."

"I'll tell ye what I hard of them swallows, neighbours," said Daddy Leeach: "them swallows and them birds, too, that goes by

the name o' willy wagtails, I'm tould for sartain has three drops o' the Devil's bloud in them, Lord be good to us."

"'Tis often and often I took notice of both kinds of them birds, the *foulhogues*, and the *spiddogue coppel;* the spiddogue coppel is never known to sing his varse of a song, only when the day is bitther could, and dripping wet; and then it's a mournful thing to hear him, and to look at him, standin' on a could wet stone, by the road side, and by the river side, liltin' his bit of a *croonawn*, and lookin' about him so 'cute, and waggin' his long tail, for all the world as if he gloried in the dark rainy-day, that puts a cloud over the mind of all christhin cratures; and them swallows, agin, they skim about, from the risin' to the settin' of the sun, and they never put foot to the ground like our own birds; but, when the storm is comin' to vex the earth, they all get in a row, together, upon an ould wall, or on the top of a body's house, and

they sing, and they sing, all of them at once, and as loud as ever they can, makin' merry at the doleful change, that's comin' on, and that they *know* is comin' on, more be-token, better nor the people themselves; and moreover there's not one among us can tell how they come here to Wind-gap, or where they come from, or where in the world they go to in the winter-time; and I often hard it said as well as our neighbour, Shawn Leeach, that the three dhrops o' the Devil's blood is in them, and in the willy-wag tails."

These comments on the recipe for the manufacture of love powders; the undeniable fact that the strange man at the Inch had been seen in the act of pulling down swallows nests; his morose and yet popular character (in a certain way); his want of personal recommendation, and yet his personal success; all this put together, left our lords and commons of Wind-gap in little doubt as to the means by which his indescribable triumphs

had been won. Nor, indeed, must we much wonder at the conclusion to which our good folks have arrived; for, according to their primitive ideas, nothing but witchcraft could account for the Turk-like sway of their abhorred neighbour; the want of good conduct in any one of the young girls of their community being looked upon as a kind of mysterious visitation.

It was, however, mentioned that, sometimes when by chance his charms ceased to influence, the strange man of the Inch did not stop short of secondary, human means. A tale of violence was added, according to which the precincts of the garden of the Inch house was looked upon as banned and unholy ground, although the hero had been disguised beyond the possibility of recognition. On all hands, it was admitted that the strange man o' the Inch had "a sort o' look," a baneful, baleful look, which, if it once rested on a comely girl of any rank, ensured

her eventual perdition, or was to be averted only by a miracle. In fact, Bridogue Mooney clearly made out her proposition, which had opened the conference round the bonfire, namely, that, "the sthrange man 'o the Inch was a cloven hoofed duowl, passin' himself for a dacent elderly man."

We extract from bye conversations of our goodfriends of Wind-gap some assertions that did not tend to set up the character of the subject of their *shannauchs*. It was vouched that the only person known to live with him was a wrinkled haggard woman; and yet many figures were seen after twilight going to the house and coming from it; and at hours of the night, when well conducted people ought to be at rest, that uproarious rioting was known to continue under his roof till day-break. "Boys of the neighbourhood" had once been venturous euough, during one of these commotions, to approach the premises. It was very dark, and they

were moving stealthily onward, when suddenly they heard a fearful, hellish shout; the lights, they had previously seen so vivid within the house, became extinguished; before they had time to advance, or recede, each in his consternation was seized, as all averred, by a "horned Divil," for the group was young and strong, and could not otherwise have been so overcome; and, thus mastered, they were urged supernaturally along, "in sich a hurry, that they had'nt time to bless themselves;" until they arrived at the river's bank, which as has been mentioned, flowed near the house; and into the river they were plunged, and out of the river they barely escaped, although good swimmers, with the wise resolution never again to oppose earthly prowess to fiendish agency.

"Be him a sinful christin, bought and sould, or be him a duowl in earnest, may the heavens keep him from our road," ejaculated Bridogue Mooney.

"Amin, and amin over agin, gossip," assented the dame, with the pendulating head; "from evil doin's, and evil doers, the Lord deliver us!"

A rather violent stir here took place, among the dancers at a little distance; and six or eight stout young fellows, heralded by the man of straw, and his Herculean helpmate, dragged towards the Mayor's chair two individuals wearing large outside coats, and broad-brimmed hats. As the parties confronted the judgment seat, hat and cloak were torn from the person of the foremost culprit; and, almost in the middle of the gossip, which had occupied itself about him, "the sthrange man o' the Inch" stood fully in view. His *nom de guerre* was shouted by more than one voice, and immediately those who had held him loosed their grasp; and he stood in the blaze of the fire, laughing loudly at the ludicrous confusion which his presence created.

Among the old women, there ensued a hidious discord of screams, and they tumbled over each other, in their hasty, though not successful, attempt to avoid the neighbourhood of one whom they themselves had magnified into a very formidable being; and, in a few seconds, those amongst them who could run, ran with all their might, and those who could only hobble, hobbled with all their energy; Bridogue Mooney leading the cohort, with the loudest screams offended virtue could put forth, while at each inch of their way over Wind-gap hill, every echo of his devilish laugh added impetus to the hearts and heels of the scandalized fugitives.

The strange man of the Inch, now that he could be really looked upon, seemed to be about forty-five; though he might be less, for his face, that is, as much of it as was fully visible, had become disfigured by ugly gashes, which probably added to it an

appearance of age. Over half of his features he wore a black handkerchief; and of the one eye left exposed, scarce any thing worse than power and brilliancy of expression could be conjectured. An air of lofty command ran through his bearing. He was clad in a full skirted coat of blue cloth, richly laced; a vest of embroidered silk, a small-clothes of blue plush, and silk stockings, and square-toed shoes, with silver buckles in them.

After the retreat of the old women, his shocking laughter suddenly settled into a bold imperious manner, and his single observable eye flashed fiercely, and his brow knit deeply above it, as he looked on every side at the gaping crowd.

"Come, make way here, fellows," he said, "I have a strong inclination to punish a score or two of you, for your rough handling, now that you have dared to rob me of my cloak and hat; make way I say, or I will

score some ugly marks on your foolish faces;" and he tapped the short crooked sword at his side.

All the old men around Maurteen, and all the young people who had followed from the place of the dance, were receding to make way accordingly, when Maurteen Maher clutched his osier-wand, and, sitting very upright in his chair, cried out in a sonorous voice—

"Stop! stop awhile, genteel, and give an account of yourself."

The strange man of the Inch turned suddenly round, and glared at the questioner.

"Yes," resumed Maurteen, "I'd have a word or two wid ye, afore ye lave our place."

The summoned person was evidently much surprised and offended at this interruption. He walked rapidly over to his worship, fixed a stern look upon him, was

silent for an instant, and at last, burst forth in a question :

"Who the devil are *you*, that stops *me*?"

Maurteen Maher did not wince before the strange man of the Inch. He held his head loftily, and his tone was bold without being arrogant, as he answered,

"*I* am the Mayor of Wind-gap, far above the Mayor of the town below us; as you may larn by lookin' on the hoight of this place, and how low the town lies at our feet."

"Take your foolish mummery to some other market, you old ridiculous Irish fellow:" said the strange man of the Inch, again vehemently turning to go away.

"There's no mummery about me," said Maurteen. "I govern the people here by their own free will and consent; and I govern them for their good."

"You're an old grey-headed idiot, I take it, and ye look d—d impertinently at

me, and I've half a mind to change your tone," continued the "sthrange man."

"Tisn't by fighting with the swoord, I should be able to rule over my neighbours; but for all that, I'm not afeard o'ye, as wicked as they say ye are, and as fierce as your one eye burns upon me; so you need not lay your hand upon your crooked hanger; the odds o'the battle 'ud be agin' ye; but I don't want any thing but pace and quiet. Listen to me; I'm tould ye said evil words into the ear of a young girl at the dance, and put your arms round her, when she did'nt want them, and for that offence on Wind-gap, you are brought before me, the Mayor. It is time for you to give over fooolish and sinful notions and behaver. The snow of age has not fallen on your locks as thick as it has upon mine; but still I'd have you be thinkin' o'your grave. 'Tis a shkandle to us on Wind-gap to see a middle-aged man runnin' the race o' the wicked; and I

say to you, repent o'your sins, and larn to be a christhin."

This magnificent address, though full of never-to-be-forgotten morality, to the ears of Maurteen's neighbours, seemed to strike the "sthrange man" as something eminently ridiculous. He burst into a renewal of his former fit of laughter, and hurried, now unobstructed, from the presence of his lecturer.

The chief offender's companion had stood apart during the scene we have described; he moved after his principal.

The Mayor advanced hastily towards him, seized his cloak, suddenly dragged it open and glanced into his face; it was but a momentary view he could have gained of the person's features, who recoiled, and drew his disguise closer round him. But there were others besides the Mayor who imagined they had recognized the second domino, as will soon be seen.

"I had a notion who was hid under that cloak," said the Mayor privately to this individual.

"I promised to stand your friend, and 'twas plain to me, and now 'tis plainer than ever, that a friend you will want to give you help when you are not thinkin' you need it. Poor boy! I hard it long ago, and I b'leve at present that there is a doom upon you, and that ye must work your way through it. Go then, in heaven's name, and face it. I'll keep my word to you all the same; the Mayor of Wind-gap *will* be your friend."

The person he addressed hastened away in the path of the strange man of the Inch, as if glad, like him, to be freed of Maurteen's sermons.

It was some time before the sensation, created by this commotion at the bonfire, became appeased. Little bare-legged scouts were sent out after the old women, who slowly returned, upon the strongest assur-

ances, on the part of the Mayor, of their personal safety. Terror may be an impulse, particularly acting upon the delicate constitution of the nervous female system; but above even terror, is to be ranked the nervous curiosity of the softer sex; so that, according to these two rules, the old sisterhood of Wind-gap may be permitted, after the allaying of their mortal fright, to reassemble once more round the bonfire, and its sovereign. Nay, they even squatted down again on the very spot they had lately abandoned, brim-full, every one of them, of most fruitful subjects of conversation. Above all other things, the Mayor's bold and magisterial bearing drew forth their unlimited eulogy; and we suspect that Maurteen had intended it should have produced such an effect; at all events, he felt his character to be considerably elevated this night, in the eyes of his subjects.

His worship continued calmly to preside over the renewed gossip, and answered in good-humoured loftiness to the adulation showered upon him. And we believe that the old women of Wind-gap could have remained for a week sitting on their heels, so highly did they relish the music of each other's tongues, had not the Mayor reminded them that the hour for the display of their activity was come; at which intimation, the aged belles and the grey-headed beaux of his jurisdiction joined hands, and, forming a circle, set to dancing with all their possible agility, round and round the glimmering remnants of the bonfire; those who could boast the greatest strength of limb supported others whose sinews refused to bend with sufficient flexibility, and whose joints had become rusty in their sockets. In this career of crippled movements; in the grey locks set floating by their motion; and in the wrinkled visages of the perform-

ers, there was a semblance more to a crowd of witches and wizards, enjoying the seething of their spells in a cauldron, than to that of earthly people, engaged in an earthly pastime; while the Mayor, with his white wand presiding over the rite, was no unfit representative of the requisite enchanter, and while the grotesque figures of Meehawl O'Moore, and of his gigantic mate, might be interpreted into two very ungainly imps, attending upon him.

When the red embers had been nine times encircled by the new dancers, each crone secured a portion of them, and took it carefully home, as one security against charms for the ensuing year; and we may safely close this chapter with the assertion that they all wended towards their beds heavily laden with the shannauchs and occurrences of this "prasent blessed St. John's Eve."

After the close of every festivity, it was

the custom of the Mayor of Wind-gap to patrol with his bailiff his circuit of authority; accordingly upon this night, when it was time for all to be a-bed and quiet, he renewed his customary precautions, and went to his own pillow assured that all his people were "safe and sound," and, against all chances, certain of continuing so till the morning. But, for once in his life, at least, the Mayor of Wind-gap was wrong.

CHAPTER V.

THERE may be some long-lived persons yet in existence, bred and born even out of the salubrious air of Wind-gap, who remember Roger Divey. He was best known in his day by the title of "yallow Roger,"—a surname derivable from the sooty-saffron hue of as much of his real surface as could be seen—namely, his large, lank, parchment-covered countenance, his hands and his legs. He was a tall, gaunt man; his trunk of

heavy bones, loosely strung together, supported by extremities, not much thicker, nor better shaped from the knees to the ancles, than the huge cudgel he always carried. At the time of our history, Roger was serjeant of the real Mayor of our town and its suburbs, including, of course, Wind-gap itself; and it was pretty well known that dame justice had no retainer in her service more mercenary than he.

If one might judge by his external aspect, he was a man of sedate gravity; apparently somewhat stupid; and honest, without the slightest shrewdness, or design.—Herein, however, lay Roger's talent; for, under the disguise of a sage and very uncomely owl, he hid the raven's cunning and rapacity. A lofty, pompous personage, withal, was Roger; slowly and solemnly he strode along the streets, his head erect, and his every action full of that "pride of place" which he felt marked him as the holder

of a station of much power and importance.

The morning after the bonfire on Windgap hill, Roger Divey was seen pacing through a certain street in the town, in which he officiated; and those in the habit of observing his outward expression, understood, by the settled dignity of his brow, and the severe and ominous protrusion of his nether lip, that he was proceeding on some errand of moment, connected with his calling. Opposite neighbours met half-way in the street, and put their heads together to express their conviction that he had weighty matters in hand; and passengers, as they encountered him, stopped short, and turned their eyes after the imposing official, each endeavouring to enlighten the other as to his probable destination.

Fully aware of the many enquiring looks directed towards his movements, Roger did not, however, vouchsafe to shew the slightest

consciousness of the important curiosity he excited. Filled with his own greatness, he strode onward; paused at the end of the street, and surveyed, with a deliberate traversing glance, a certain house; then nodded his head sedately to itself; moved three stately steps to the hall door; and calculatingly raised its knocker; and in his own good time, banged it down with such force that one might think the lion's head, moulded on it, had sent forth a roar.

After this tremendous challenge, Roger drew back some paces; hit the head of his gigantic shillelagh against the paving-stones; stretching forth his right arm at full length, rested the palm of his right hand upon it; fixed his left arm a-kimbo; boldly advanced his right leg before his person; threw back his head; and in this position awaited the result of his summons.

The door was opened by a frightened-looking serving wench, and the figure of



the landlady of the house appeared at some distance behind her.

"I say, you girl, you," demanded the man of authority, "would ye have one Masther George Blundell on the premishes, here?"

"E—ah!" was the only reply of the astonished and true Irish girl.

"Ye slut, ye!" continued Roger, "make thrue answer to sich custions as shall be demanded o' ye, at your peril, do ye see me?"

"What may be your business with my lodger, Mr. Blundell?" questioned the landlady, coming forward.

"That's his own consarn, Misthress of the house, d' ye see me? Make known to the young gintleman, i' ye plaze, that w'd discoorse with him; we don't have a call to people for no rason."

"Mr. Blundell isn't yet up, I b'lieve," said the landlady.

"That makes no maxim, Marram; up or down, its all the same to us. Jest give

him to undherstand that w'd hould some speech with him."

"You cannot see him now, you must call another time, my good fellow."

"Ha, hum, good fellow? who is it you affront by the name of good fellow? Marram, we must see him, and we shall see him, or we'll know for what."

Roger having spoken these words in a loud infallible voice which filled the whole street, cast his eye towards a window over head, and at it perceived the object of his enquiry looking down at him: he waved his arm magisterially, and continued—"Walk ye down here to us, young Master, walk down here to us, d'ye see me?" nor was this command given in a puny accent.

George Blundell was shortly on the threshold.

"What have you to say to me, Sirrah?"

"Ah, hum, Sirrah? we are no Sirrah,

my youth, we are no Sirrah; isn't these purty doin's? purty doin's isn't they? by ye're lave, here, all o' ye, by your lave, d'ye see me?" and Roger jostled through the group, which his bellowing and other noises had created, strode to the door-way, and, passing George Blundell, entered the hall of the house.

"What's to get ye clear out o' this prosecution, young master? there isn't a bail bond to be taken, if we don't give in to take it for ye?"

"Why are you disturbing the house, fellow? let me know your errand at once, or I will thrust you into the street."

"Ha, hum, this kind o' talk won't sarve ye, while ye're afore his worship, and myself; its a burglary matther, let me tell ye, many a stout fellow has died without being sick for a less charge, d'ye see me?"

"Explain yourself, or begone"—

"Begone! ha, hum; would nothing do

your turn, my young masther, but to make a burglary on the dwellin' house, *why at arums*, and to brake dours, and to take, force, and carry away a man's daughter from him ? and wid sticks, stones, and staves, to say nothing o' swoords and pistols, to make *salt and butthery* on a man ? Let me tell ye, d'ye see me, that we know how to dale wid sich doin's ; and barrin' there's one to make the case clear for ye, ye'll be hard run to keep away from the hill beyant the river, where some people dance upon nothing, to save their shoes."

"You are under some mistake, fellow ; leave the house, and do not make a crowd round the door."

"Hem, låve the house ! is that all I'm to get for my warning ? "

"Leave it instantly !" and George looked dangerous.

"And who's to stand for ye, when ye're afore the Mayor and me, d'ye see me ? "

George took the man by the collar, and, without much exertion, led him to the threshold, and pushed him over it. At that moment, his eyes rested upon a certain face and form in an opposite window, he bowed confusedly, retreated quickly, and shut the door on the outraged dignitary.

Roger had paid this early visit, in the way of pecuniary speculation. He calculated on being retained by George Blundell as an advocate, and had hoped to pocket by his services a good round sum. Now, it might have been supposed that in propor tion to his seeming failure, would be his wrath and disappointment. But, he not only felt no passion, but did not lose sight of his main object. He was not a hasty man, and he had his wits sufficiently about him to reckon that, with proper management, this assault on his sacred person, might eventually increase his profits. For Roger had never much objection to a slight

drubbing; on the contrary, he considered such little events as among his means of gaining an honest livelihood. We have seen him put forward his as yet unofficial charge, against George Blundell, in the highest tone of exaggeration. This was also his uniform practise; for the greater the terror he inspired in a guilty breast, the more heavy would be the retaining fee, for his pleading before the Mayor; or if he thundered forth his accusations and threats upon an innocent person, the more likely would be the accused to fly out into a passion and break Roger's pate, and in that case, although the original process fell to the ground, he would be sure to make money by the "salt and butthery business."

To the mansion of the Mayor, (by the way, we have lately sketched a Mayor of a town and his sergeant, but trusting to the total dissimilarity between them and our present subjects, we cannot resist the temp-

tation of presenting our readers with a companion-picture to the former one,) to the mansion of the Mayor, Roger wended his way. It was at that time the good old practise of the chief magistrates of the city to hold their court wherever they pleased, and their private dwellings were, during their term of office, often transformed, therefore, into halls of justice. Wind and weather permitting, our present Mayor decided all cases in the open air, at least, so far as regarded the positions of the plaintiffs and defendants before him. The house, occupied about fifty-five years ago by his worship, is now in existence, and whatever might then have been thought of it, appears to us a very mean edifice, only two stories high, and the whole of its first floor, as was also the case in Roger Divey's day, used as a shop; of which the little bow-window still holds, we are assured by very old people, the self-same (to all appearance at least,) red-herrings, tallow

candles, rows of tobacco, decanters of spirits, tea-cannisters, and so forth, and so forth, which it did in the eighteenth century.

One half of the Mayor's shop-door was raised up on hinges, and hooked against the ceiling; the top edge of the other half served as a resting-place for his round elbows, when in an attitude half-standing, half-bending, and mainly supported by those elbows, he discharged his judicial functions; the complaining and the answering parties being assembled meantime, as we before premised, in the street. By the charter of the city we treat of, it is decreed that "wise discreet citizens" shall be chosen to fill the several municipal offices; but unluckily, the instrument gives no datum by which one may ascertain what is to be considered wisdom and discretion in the said city; so that these qualities, legally specified as indispensible, have from time to time been

very differently exemplified, in very different individuals.

Roger Divey had been dubbed, "yallow Roger;" his worship the Mayor, who, on the arbitrary word of the interpreters of the charter, was a "wise and discreet citizen," had also received a surname, that of "alderman split-fig:" because, when weighing a penny-worth of figs in his shop, he would divide one of them into four parts, rather than give weight beyond the legal complement. He had contrived, however, to amass a considerable sum of money, (considerable, according to his time and position,) chiefly by these very saving talents; and we will at once admit that there can be no more valuable quality than the aptitude to get rich; and that it is our belief that, by the sense of all the world, as well as by that of his constituents, our present Mayor gave, in the length of his purse, proof positive of "wisdom and discretion."

When Roger Divey arrived at the Mayor's place of audience, a crowd of suitors had assembled in the street, around the half-door, or hatch-way. At the appearance of the influential officer, all instantly flocked to him, and all began, in the same breath, to relate their different grievances, or put forward their different defences. Roger authoritatively silenced this clamour; singled out the opposing parties, and led them, each in turn, into a lane that turned off at the corner of the Mayor's dwelling. There he listened to charge and reply; cried Ha! ha! hem! at proper intervals; occasionally nodded his sage head; most condescendingly glanced out of the corner of his eye, into the palm of his hand, to ascertain the relative amount of each fee; for Roger was always retained on both sides; and the cases in this initiatory court were adjourned in the first instance, to the greasy counter in the Mayor's shop, where, before real trial,

Roger further received from each disputant a little conciliation, in the shape of a glass of the peculiar kind of spirituous liquor which, by anxious calculation, could be concluded most acceptable to his palate; one giving him half a "noggin'" of gin and bitters, another a dram of brandy, another a modicum of purl and gill, and so on; and all this while Roger left his group of clients doubtful of the side he should ultimately take.

There was a second adjournment into the street; the half-door was again closed and bolted, and at length his Worship appeared to his crowded court, leaning over it. His wig not being ready dressed, a red woollen night-cap covered his bald head, and an ample outside coat, sufficiently ample even for his dimensions, hung cloakwise from his shoulders, its sleeves falling down his back; and we vault over his hatch-way, and land in his shop, to add that the knees

of his black plush breeches were, even at this hour of the morning, yet unbuttoned; that his broad red garters, which lapped over and over in many folds, to tighten his light blue stockings, were visible a little above the round of his leg; and that his feet were in comfortable listen slippers.

His worship was stricken in years; low, stout, and indeed undignified, in figure; the opposite, in fact, of his chief officer; and a pair of large grey protruding eyes, a broad flat nose; an under lip so conveniently pushing out, as to afford a comfortable resting place for its upper one, and altogether a round plump face, shewed little of a physiognomonical corroboration of the evidence supplied, on a certain point, by his long purse.

Giving his loose outside coat a twitch, in order to settle it round his shoulders, and then folding it comfortably under his arms, he leaned, as usual, both his elbows on the

edge of the half-door, and quietly turned his leaden eyes up and down the street.

"The top o' the mornin' to your Worship" — began Roger, snatching off his three-cocked hat, scraping his hob-nailed brogues along the pavement, and accompanying this movement by a corresponding bend in his lathy figure.

"A good morning to you, kindly, Roger," answered his worship, his gurgling voice making way with difficulty through his short round throat, "and what thrials comes' on to-day, Roger?"

In practical answer to this query, Roger at once proceeded in his accustomed capacity of counsel for and against. He brought forward plaintiffs and defendants in turn; he detailed, with great deliberation, and much ostentation of manner, various cases, with the replies to each; and now it was that the amount of a fee had due effect. If, during his recital, the party whose advocate

he had for the moment become, found himself misrepresented, and endeavoured in consequence to interrupt the statement, his Worship interposed, saying, with great quietude and complacency, " Asy now, asy! and let Roger tell it"—occasionally, however, the Mayor turned his eye heavily upon Roger's client, with an expression which indicated a sluggish wish to comprehend the orator's entanglement of a plain story, had heaven but blessed him with a due quantum of " wisdom and discretion." But if, in reply to such mute appeals, the plaintiff began to speak, the defendant was sure to start against him at the same moment, with the utmost power of his lungs and ingenuity; at which his Worship's perplexity becoming trebled, he was glad to fall back upon Roger's single puzzle; and his " Asy, asy now, good people, lave it to Roger"—would soon stop all clamour; for Roger scarce ever failed to impose silence under the good magistrate's authority.

"Well Roger, and what do *you* think about it?" his Worship would ask, when both stories were recapitulated over and over; and Roger, summing up evidence, in a masterly style, gave a decision, which the Mayor instantly adopted as his own. If any aggrieved person happened to expostulate—"Go your ways, go your ways, my good man"—was the signal for Roger to force off the grumbling suitor. Nor could the Mayor be in any instance accused of injustice; for, although his judgments were most frequently absurd, his intentions bore him harmless. It was not his fault that Roger's superior genius should keep his mind in leading-strings; and we must therefore in candor visit upon Roger exclusively the faulty administration of justice, in this rather slovenly court.

One man, amongst the complainants of the morning, seemed bursting with the magnitude of the case he had come to put for-

ward, and with the intensity of the feeling it excited in his breast. Frequently he advanced to begin his story; but Roger invariably thrust him back, to make way for others. In fact, whether from indigence, or because he regarded his grievance as sufficiently great to command immediate and full attention, this person had given Roger no retainer. But at length, every excuse for further delay was exhausted, and Roger could only look up and down the street in expectation of George Blundell's appearance; and, finally, as that young gentleman chose to absent himself altogether, very contrary to the hopes of the venal advocate, the Mayor's sergeant determined to plead forcibly against him, merely that his services might in future be more properly estimated.

"Plaze your worship," said Roger, "there is one Juff Carroll, d'ye see me; and he's from the Wind-gap abroad there, your

worship; and he lives in his little cabin there, indhusterin' for his bread, d'ye see me; and we can put in bail, your worship, that he's an honest hard-working crature of a man; and, by coorse, 'twas last night your worship"—

"Jest an hour afore the dawn of day," cried the applicant, "when my darlin' Peggy and myself came home from the bonfire on Wind-gap hill; and we sed our little prayers, and we went to our beds."

"Wisht, wisht, Juff Carroll," interrupted Roger.

"Asy, asy now, my honest man! and let Roger tell it to me," decided the Mayor: we would vary his phraseology, but that by so doing, we should not be true to our original; for he invariably made use of the same words, on similar occasions; as if life, time, breath, and above all things, intellect, were things too precious to be squandered on the vain attempt of trying

to express the same thought in two different ways.

"This poor honest Juff Carroll," resumed Roger, "who is here standing afore your worship, in the hoight of trouble, d'ye see me — he has a purty daughter, a purty honey, d'ye see me, your worship."

"Is she a purty honey, indeed, Roger?" his worship was always moved when Roger became oratorical.

"Oh! where's my Peggy now?" ejaculated the bereaved parent, "where have they dragged her, from the father that doated on her, in his heart within him!"

"And you were fond of her in your heart, my poor man;" demanded the mayor, surprising all who heard him with the abundance of his speech; but he had a daughter too.

"Why shouldn't I, your Worship? she was my only child! and the mother of her left her to me on the bed where she was

born ! the light o' my eyes she was upon my flure, the comfort of my days !"

"Whist, whist now, Juff Carroll,"—interrupted the sergeant, getting jealous of Nature's spontaneous eloquence.

"Yes, asy my good man, asy now," added the mayor, brushing the tears from his eyes, "asy and let Roger tell it."

Accordingly Roger resumed, "T'was last night, d'ye see me, your worship, that the burglary and threspass was done on poor Juff Carroll; they broke open the dowr of his cabin, *why at arums*, d'ye see me, your worship, and the little daughter was taken, forced, and carried away from him."

"Dear me, dear me," sympathized the mayor, "and tell me, Roger, does this honest poor man know the people that done the burglary and the threspass on him ? hey, Roger ?"

"I do, I do know," answered the father, too rapidly for Roger's interference ; "I'd

all as one swear my book oath that the man that sthruck me down was the sthrange man o' the Inch, and among the other men that were helpin' him, I'll swear there was one man, wearin' the same cloak and the same hat that young George Blundell had upon him, when I saw him in the sthrange man's company at the bon-fire; the time that the sthrange man frightened my poor Peggy, by his unmannerly behaver to her, and by his evil words in her ear."

"What does he mane by the sthrange man o' the Inch, Roger?" asked the mayor.

"Why, your worship, tisn't out of your knowledge that there is one dangerous tory of a man livin' at the wicked ould house at the Inch, abroad there; and he's an ould offender, d'ye see me—we had him up more than onst, afore your worship: and since then, he goes on with more wickeder plottin's and doin's than ever, out at the Inch, and"—

A smart tap from an open palm on Roger's shoulder interrupted his narrative. Offended and angry at the freedom, he turned quickly round; the strange man of the Inch was at his elbow. The father of Peggy Carroll, without power to utter a word, stared, gaped, pointed, and chattered his teeth at the dreaded visitor.—

The strange man was now dressed differently from his costume of the preceding night. A black silk handkerchief yet covered indeed, one eye and part of one cheek; over the other side of his face fell the peak of his laced cocked hat; and, to the fancy of some detesting observers, seemed to borrow a corresponding fierceness, and to become somehow frightfully indentified with the flaming ball which it shaded. His coat was of scarlet cloth embroidered with gold lace, his small clothes were black satin, his stockings black silk, and his well polished shoes were adorned with sparkling silver buckles.

There was a malicious, confident jocularity of manner about the strange man, as he moved into the lane, at the corner of the Mayor's house, beckoning Roger Divey to follow him. Roger, comprehending, at a glance, the meaning of his invitation, instantly accepted it. For a few moments he and his formidable confidante stood there within the recess of a gate-way. The strange man did not re-emerge into the main street, but Roger duly re-appeared before the Mayor. Peggy Carroll's father was disjointedly proceeding in his tale of grievance.*

"Juff Carroll, hould your tongue," interrupted Roger, and the Mayor pronounced his usual command for silence. Roger gravely addressed the chief magistrate:

"Your Worship, poor Juff Carroll, that's here to the fore, and an honest crature of a man he is, d'ye see me, has a bad case to argufy afore your Worship — an' we'll all

do our endavors to rightify him, and to bring the offendhers undher the law, and why not, d'ye see me. More be token, since they made *salt and butthery* agin the person of Juff Carroll hisself—not to talk of the burglary and of the carrying away, by force and arums, o' the poor purty dhaughter of him,—'twas the greatest murdher, ever you seen, your worship, that he hadn't the light o' the day, or even a bit of a candle, or a rish-light itself, or a thing o' the kind, that 'ud help him to see and to 'dentify the house-breakers that sthruck him down on the flure of his own little cabin, into a swoon, like, in sich a way, (the villains!) that he couldn't see 'em if he had the full light o' the day itself, because people's eyes are shet, when there's a wakeness on them; an' 'twould be against the law to let wicked people be free that brake the pace a second time, for poor Juff Carroll, and dhragged his dhaughter, as aforesaid, over her father's threshold,

afther committing burglary upon the dour of the cabin; all the while that the poor sufferin' man couldn't tell from Adam who made him fall down into the swoon."

"He that forced off my Peggy," cried out Juff Carroll, "was here a moment agone —that was the robber of my child, and young Blundell was helpin' of him."

"Asy now, asy, poor man, God help ye; but you'll put Roger out: let Roger tell it to me; well, Roger?" interposed the Mayor.

"There's foolish people, plaze your Worship, that talks o' the jontleman livin' in the ould house at the Inch, abroad there; bud we'll put in good 'sponsible bail for him, afore your Worship, that he's nothin' but a quiet, dacent man, and that he'd no more commit a burglary on poor Juff Carroll's dour, *why at arums*, no more nor we'd do it ourselves, afther a manner, d'ye see me, your Worship. But if we can come, by

hook or crook across the bad boys that have done the harum to this cratur o' a man, (poor Juff Carroll that's to the fore,) won't we lay the heavy hand on 'em, and for why not, d'ye see me, your Worship?"

There were violent efforts, on the part of the agonized father, to fix his charge on the person now praised in the speech of the mercenary officer; but peace and quiet were placidly recommended by the Mayor, and obstreperously insisted on by Roger.

"Ah, your worship, he's a very, very honest jontleman, livin' quiet and asy at the Inch; a nate paceable house, your worship, all alone by itself, out of harum's way; and, as for young Masther Blundell, if the cratur of a daughter belonging to this poor honest man was to stay in poor Juff's cabin till she ran to seed into an ould granny, he's never the boy that 'ud lay a finger on her; he's the most modestest of all the boys, gentle or simple, that your wor-

ship and I has the throuble of lookin' afther. And so, your worship, d'ye see me, we'll do our endavours to saize the raal offendhers, or by this stick in my hand, Juff Carroll," he continued, turning to the now desponding parent—"we'll see the just thing done by you, in time and rason; for his worship, the Mayor, does right and thrue by every sowl that comes afore his face, d'ye see me."

The case was decided. In vain did Juff Carroll aver that he was "a'most proof positive," that the strange man of the Inch was the ruffian that plundered him of his child, and that George Blundell was one of his disguised accomplices. Roger still contended, and very plausibly too, according to the Mayor's opinion, that Juff could not at any period of the affray have distinguished the persons of his assaulters and destroyers, because, eventually, he had lain insensible under their hands: and poor

Juff at last plodded his way homeward, to Wind-gap, comforted solely by the slender shadow of promise given by Roger Divey, to see justice done to him. The last words which struck his ear, while turning his back on the judgment seat, were those of his worship the Mayor:

"God help ye, poor man! go your ways now; 'tis a very sorrowful thing for ye; but don't ye hear what Roger says? go your ways, go your ways."

CHAPTER VI.

We are sorry that there hangs over George Blundell, according to his own account, at least, some of the old thread-bare mystery of parentage, and so forth, and wish that we could, as faithful historians, skip it altogether, or else give him at once in the eyes of the world, a respectable house-keeping father and mother. Against our will, however, we are bound to report of him the morsel of romance which he asserted about

himself. From his twelfth year, to his twentieth, (he was now nearly twenty-one,) he had been receiving his education in the eminent seminary of the town where he at present resided, and his remittances had been invariably liberal. When questioned by his class-mates, in the bold intrusive way in which boys will question one another, as to who, and what he was, George Blundell stated himself to be the son of a wealthy merchant, a native of Ireland, who resided in a foreign country. At first this brief explanation appeared satisfactory; but, unfortunately for his quiet, the lad distinguished himself by the intensity of his application to his studies, and in consequence by extraordinary progress and scholastic superiority; and now it was found out that his station in life, or his social position, was sufficiently doubtful to alarm his aristocratic young school-fellows, and George was insulted. But those who outraged his feelings suffered

for their temerity; he proved himself a fierce fighter, as well as an eclipsing student; in fact, when his passion was roused, he took any odds in years, weight, or height, and always thrashed his man.

One or two other features of his character at school may be noticed. In the athletic sports of his companions, such as football, wrestling, and so forth, he did not often join. Most frequently while they ran riot over the beautiful lawn that stretched from the academy to the water's edge, he sought a quiet nook, with his favourite authors. And yet, occasionally, when the game or pastime of the day was particularly exciting, he would start up from his loneliness, fling aside his books, enter into the contest, for agile superiority, as eagerly as if it were a question of life and death; and when the palm of excellence became unwillingly ceded to him, he would again quietly and gravely, and with all his previous de-

votedness, return to his voluntary studies. And thus his boyish days promised a manhood of deep enthusiasm, no matter what might prove to be its momentary object, while his talents for attaining any thing, coupled with his fiery and overbearing spirit, swept all competition before him: and such a character bid fair for eminence, either in vice or in virtue, according as it might be directed. Now we turn to other matters.

Peggy Carroll, whom we have just seen carried off by, according to her father's account, the man of the Inch, was the foster-sister of Anny Kennedy; and in many points poor Peggy was as dear to Anny as if they had really been sisters. The news, therefore, of the girl's abduction greatly afflicted Anny Kennedy; and with her young attendant, a first cousin of Peggy, she shed many tears over the misfortune. But those tears flowed, perhaps, as readily on another

account. It was soon no secret, all over the town, that Juff Carroll had charged George Blundell as an accomplice in the outrage which deprived him of his child: Anny could not close her ears against the rumour; and although his worship, the mayor, had decided that it was only a misconception, yet, did fear and doubt and terror, possess the young girl's heart; the more particularly as she had been an eye-witness of Roger Divey's visit to the house of her lover, and of George's violent ejection of him into the street—a piece of bravadoism, by the way, which, in Anny's estimation, he need not have enacted, had he felt himself calmly innocent of the serious accusation laid at his door.

Jeffery Carroll lived down by the river-side, and his cabin was the very last within range of the jurisdiction of the Mayor of Wind-gap; and moreover, it stood not more than a quarter of a mile from the widely

celebrated house of the Inch. In Jeffery's humble abode, Anny and her maid Grace had spent many happy days of their infancy; thither, about the noon of the morning of the investigation before the Mayor, they bent their steps; and there, from poor Jeffery's own tongue they received a confirmation of all they had previously heard. Nay, the afflicted and loquacious man, talking himself, hour after hour, into certainty upon points which he had before but strongly believed, at present averred that, beyond all doubt, George Blundell was one of the ravishers of his daughter. And now Anny's grief and despair at least equalled his. After some time spent in vain endeavours to console Juff Carroll, the two young women began to retrace their way homeward. They were close to a lane which, shaded by bushes on either hand, led directly to the water's edge, and were about to enter it, when Anny Kennedy drew back

in terror, for within it she heard the accents of George Blundell, although she could not see his person, and he was engaged in conversation with another man, whose harsh, abrupt tones conveyed a frightful anticipation to Anny's heart.

"One word more, one sound more, from your lips, Sir, and you shall repent it," said the strange bad voice, in a most dictatorial tone—"from that instant I throw you upon your own flourishing resources; you must wait my time, Sir, and nothing else will I hear on the subject."

"And while I wait your time, she may be lost to me for ever," replied George Blundell.

"That is nothing to the purpose, Sir;—but tell me, Sir, what like girl is this, who has so caught your foolish fancy? this Anny Kennedy?"

"She is such, even in person, that words of mine would fail to describe her."

Notwithstanding her terror, and all her agonizing misgivings, the true woman fluttered for an instant at these words in Anny's heart, and she felt rather obliged to George Blundell.

"Snap her up, Sir—snap her up; it can only be herself you want, and herself is easily had for a little courage; let me tell you, boy, that a woman is like a gallant vessel on the sea, though still weaker than the ship that encounters her, and the sooner you come to close action, the sooner she strikes her colours; and for this you may take the word of one who knows both the ship at sea, and woman in every clime."

"I fear," resumed George, "that the accusation in which I am involved may have reached her ears—If I might only explain to her, or try, ever so confidentially, to—

"Tut, tut, Sir! not a syllable,—Never shall she be yours, that is, with my assist-

ance, if you open your lips to her on the matter."

Anny stood pale and breathless at these words—It suddenly occurred to her, to avoid the observation of George Blundell and of this unknown arbiter of his destinies, and the wish was fearfully increased, when she heard their footsteps approaching. Her only mode of retreat, however, was along the field-path by which she had approached the lane; and this was unprotected by any covering or screen; so that she could hope to remain out of their view only for a few moments. While hesitating and trembling, George Blundell and his companion, suddenly issuing from the lane, were close to her. At sight of Anny, the former seemed overwhelmed with amazement and confusion; the latter started into an attitude of bold and intrusive interest, and fixed a daring look upon her face.

"The sthrange man!—the sthrange man

o' the Inch!" whispered Anny's attendant, grasping her mistress by the arm; and, agitated as Anny herself was, she felt that poor Grace Carroll shook in a very palsy of fear.

But Anny took her resolution and her course at once: onward she hurried, in as quick a pace as she could command, Grace Carroll still holding her arm, and trotting at her side. George Blundell addressed her, but she had passed him before the words reached her ear; she heeded him not, but hastened onward—He called her by name; she did not notice him. She heard his foot behind her; Anny, identified as he now clearly stood with the evil person in whose company she had found him, felt an impulse to run with all her might from her lover; but she checked the nervousness, by a recollection that such an act would be beneath her.

"Dearest Anny, why do you shun me

thus?" asked George Blundell, when he had come up with her—she again tried to quicken her pace, but did not answer him. He kept close at her side, and besought her to speak. She glanced hastily behind her; the strange man was not in view—a turn in the lane had hidden him from her. She felt somewhat relieved, yet could not, without an effort, command her breath to say—

"Mr. Blundell, I had rather walk alone."

"Anny, adored Anny, what can be the meaning of this? Why do you shun to-day the man you did not shun yester evening?"

Anny was again silent, and still walked briskly on—her movements a little retarded by the way, in consequence of the heavy weight, in the shape of Grace Carroll, which dragged down her arm.

"Anny, is it possible, Anny, you can give credit to those absurd rumours raised against me? and do you really think me guilty, Anny, of all they lay to my charge?"

She stopped suddenly, and looking down for an instant, answered him, for a girl, sternly—

"Mr. Blundell, I will not pronounce an opinion on your guilt, or your innocence; but, as calmly and as firmly as my foolish fright, and my true indignation, permit, I tell you that, even with the bare imputation on your character of the crimes to which you allude, it is more than presumptuous in you to address me at present, as you do."

"Presumptuous, my own darling Anny? presumptuous, did you say?" whined forth the unintelligible George Blundell.

"Yes, Sir, presumptuous; for do you suppose that I can ever again speak with a man, even in the coldest intercourse of society, who has violated the sanctity of a virtuous roof, and dragged a daughter from a father's arms? Or, Sir, do you suppose, have you dared to suppose, that I ever could have interchanged even the slighest

intimacy with him, had I imagined he was capable of such an act?"

"My adored Anny, I swear to you by the—"

"Fie, Sir, fie—your coming oath is a new affront—I am a woman and a lady, and not yet at your mercy, to listen to it."

"Oh Anny—most beloved Anny—I know not what to say—"

"Neither do I know, Sir, what you may say; but I know perfectly well what you ought to do. Listen to me, Mr. Blundell—I loved, and I love my foster-sister, Peggy Carroll; although a humble girl, she was a very good-hearted one—to say nothing of her being very lovely; she was a sensible and discreet girl too, and used to act as a kind of elder sister towards me:—Go, Sir, to your bad companion—the disreputable man you have just parted from—go to him, Sir, and persuade him to restore my poor Peggy to her agonized father; let her be re-

stored, Mr. Blundell, as you found her, and as I knew her; but at all events, Sir,—Oh *do* restore her to her father!" and the once coquetting Anny wept bitter and beautiful tears.

"God!" groaned Blundell, "I see I am lost for ever!"

There was seemingly deep affliction in the tones of his voice as he uttered these few words; they struck like a knell on Anny's ear; she could not avoid glancing up into his face, and its expression touched her heart. Woe, and despair of the deepest hue, racked over it. It claimed even common compassion; and the good, the pure-minded, and the gentle-hearted Anny involuntarily afforded it her full pity. For indeed, she argued—if argument she could be supposed to have made—it did not express callous profligacy, but only spoke of an intense, inward suffering.

"Well, well, George,—Mr. Blundell, I meant to say—what is your answer to me

at last?" Her beautiful little lips were now pale, and convulsed with an effort to cease from her weeping.

"Anny," he answered, "you are right; I do not blame you; I blame, no matter whom—or what—and—but that you are present, I could curse my fate, and the day of my birth. And it is true, very true, that you should not hold the most ordinary intercourse with a person accused as I am; I will not, therefore, intrude upon you; but, at a future time, perhaps, when I may possibly be able to cast the imputation from me, your first scorn may abate, and—"

"*Will* you restore Peggy Carroll to her father?" interrupted Anny.

"At present," answered George Blundell, "I make but this simple declaration—I am guiltless of the young woman's abduction. Professions of principle are nothing. It will, and, under my circumstances, it ought to avail me little to say, that I contemn

and detest such proceedings; for I ought to be able to prove my general assertion, in the particular case you speak of, or my words are as the wind. I only add, my adored, and respected Anny, that if it be in my power to restore Peggy Carroll to her father, the good deed shall be done."— He took off his hat, and bowed low and solemnly.

Even against her sense of all the proprieties, Anny felt half inclined towards a longer parley, but she resisted the temptation, and ceremoniously returning his salutation, passed sagely on. Turning the last point of a curve on her path, she happened, almost without her own wish, to glance back; George Blundell was standing motionless on the spot where she had left him, his hat yet in his right hand; his eyes following Anny, and his left hand pressed across his temples. It was very uncalculating of Anny, that at this sight her com-

passion outweighed her sense of injury, and that fresh tears — but now not for Peggy Carroll—glistened in her eyes.

"Oh, Miss Anny !" said Grace Carroll, as they proceeded along, "did you ever know such loock as we had this day, to get clear of them so well ?"

"Very true, Grace, very true," the young lady answered, scarcely knowing the nature of the question she replied to.—On she walked, her eyes cast down, and her thoughts absorbingly occupied. Her companion continued —

"Did a livin' look ever rest on so terrible a man, as that sthrange man o' the Inch, Miss Anny? Och ! its a mercy there's but one eye in his head, or nobody at all would stand before him, they say ; there's not a young crature he stares at that doesn't come to sorrow by him—Poor cousin Peggy, poor cousin Peggy, what a lot is yours!—But—the Lord above be our guard and protection,"

she suddenly added, pulling at the arm she still held. Anny was startled; she raised her eyes: they had just turned another quick curve of the path-way, which led them homeward; the man they so much disliked and feared was again before them. The green lane barely allowed two persons to walk on abreast; had they gone on, they must, therefore, have separated, and each in turn have come alone into close contact with the person of the strange Man of the Inch; who, as if to increase their difficulty, stood in the middle of the way. The terrified girls necessarily paused; Grace Carroll's feet scarce able to support her, and Anny, though endeavouring to summon up her utmost courage, did not feel much calmer.

"Will the beautiful Anny excuse me for waylaying her in this manner?" said the intruder, while the eye which Grace Carroll so much dreaded, seemed to shoot fire on the young lady he addressed.—"But one

glance of such beauty as your's only arouses the wish for a second."

"Allow us to pass on, Sir," said Anny.

"I perceive, fair lady, that fools have been filling your head with silly stories about me; in fact, the good folks of these parts want to make a kind of buggaboo of me, to frighthen their children, and grown-up young people with; but I should expect more sense, as well as more charity, from such a countenance as yours, Miss Kennedy; doubtless you can laugh, as I assure you I do, to my great amusement, at those absurd stories; for," advancing on her, "I swear by this fair hand"—

"Back, Sir!" interrupted Anny, herself recoiling—"Dare you insult *me*?"

"Insult you! By the fire under ground, beautiful Anny, I would not stand by and see the shadow of an offence offered to you; but, being beautiful, how can you avoid paying its penalty of a little sincere admiration?"

Anny's feelings were such as we may suppose to agitate one suddenly thrust into a wild beast's den, who is afraid to arouse the animal's savage nature, even by a single movement.

"Well, Sir, I suppose I ought to feel thankful for your flattering opinion; but, Sir, we are strangers to each other, and—"

"I know that"—interrupted this certainly strange man, "and my business here, therefore naturally is to try for the honour of your acquaintance."

"Sir, the impropriety of such a thing must, I should hope, be very evident; I would pursue my way with my maid, if it please you—"

"Your maid?—Oh—aye—" and here Grace Carroll came in for her passing share of the regards of the one eye which she held in much more abhorrence than ever, we are sure, did the sage Ulysses that of the chief Cyclop. Instantly she dropped on her

knees; hid her face in her hands, worked the points of her brogues into the dust of the path, and cried out—"Och! Sir—no—not me—not me—and the Lord be good to ye."

"Get up, you foolish wench, and run home as fast as you can," resumed the strange man, whose interest seemed not very much created by the plain, though good-natured, features of poor Grace.

"Ah then, won't I Sir, and thank ye!" shouted the consternated girl, feeling the touch of his hand upon her shoulder; and, every thing forgotten, even the safety of her idolized mistress, up to her feet sprang Grace, and onward she went, loudly yelling and clapping her hands.

"This is too insolent," said Anny—trying to pass her tormentor, by almost imitating Grace's example, and running—

"Your hand, then, at least, to say Good-bye," continued the strange man,

endeavouring to suit his action to his word.

"Touch me not, fellow!" cried Anny, snatching away her hand, and bounding backwards—"Oh God! is there no resource against an insult like this?"

"Your sarvant, Miss Anny—and your sarvant again, my good Sir;" said Maurteen Maher, close at the strange man's back. Anny darted to him, and seized one of his arms, whispering, "save me! oh! save me, good father!"

"Well, Miss Anny, well," said the Mayor of Wind-gap, affecting a simple jocularity of manner: "I often hard it said, and now its the b'lief I'll die in, that you are the most free-hearted, comical young lady, that ever we had among us; sure it's a high joke to see ould Maurteen Maher made prisoner by the purtiest cratūre the sun shines on. Did ever sich thing come to your knowledge afore, Sir? Maurteen

continued appealing very innocently to the strange man.

"Faiks, and surely I ought to cock my head higher than ever I did. But, Miss Anny, I'll tell you how 'tis to be, this prasent time—the road is too narrow for three of us, and so we must take our way down the hill, over the river—" and, almost while he spoke, the Mayor of Wind-gap suddenly assisted Anny from where they stood, and half ran with her down the hill of which he had spoken.

Strange to say, the strange man, strange as he was, did not attempt to follow them; only gaining a point from which he could note the progress of the old beau, and his charge; and, during his retreat, Maurteen would occasionally look up, and address a word to his strange-ship, while under his breath he encouraged his companion, telling her to fear nothing.

At about the midst of the descent of the

hill, there were high clumps of wild furze and young trees—and, notwithstanding the Mayor's exhortations, Anny's courage began again to fail her, as she heard issuing from the obscurity they made, a wild wailing voice.

"Come out o' that, you poor frightened crature," said Maurteen, "and thank God that gave *me* the sense, when it pleased him to lave you without any, to find you runnin' away from your poor misthress, and to hide you where you could meet her again. Arn't ye sorrowful, ye poor *skreed* * of a crature?" continued Maurteen, as the half-calmed girl appeared — "arn't ye sorrowful, in your heart, for havin' desarted your darlin' young misthress, in her sore need?"

"Oh then, indeed and indeed I am--" sobbed Grace, but now more tranquilly than before, as she a second time fell on

* Atom.

her knees, and clasped and kissed her mistress's hand.

Maurteen, doubly charged, a girl hanging upon each arm, continued his way towards and by the river side. He thought he might now have escaped the observation of an eye which he did not always wish to follow his notions, but seeing the strange man still within view, though at a distance, he resumed with a very primitive laugh, "Now ar'nt they merry souls, Sir? see here, Sir; see how they're makin' their own sport of the ould man. *Bonnacth lath,* * Sir. God be wid ye, Sir."

"And now, Miss Anny," continued the Mayor of Wind-gap, when they had really lost sight of their bugbear, "hould yourself up, and never be daunted. I thought it the best way to come off quiet and aisy; its ever the wisest plan; he saw well enough

* Good bye.

that you were frightened out of your seven senses at him; and I have a notion—for he sees far with his one eye—that he guessed I was no fool, though I spoke so simple. But no matther. It wouldn't answer either him, or me, to come to cross purposes, at all."

"I suppose, my good friend, it was not by accident you came to our relief?" asked Anny.

"And indeed you suppose the truth, my purty lady. Do you remember that, of a May evening, I promised you I'd be your friend? and I didn't lose sight of that promise. People told me that you came to-day, out o' good nature, to poor Juff Carroll's cabin; and when I hard that, I was watchin' after you, for some time; and I saw that ould fox makin' a short cut to be afore ye, on your path:—and, as I knew more about the short cuts, in these places, than he could know—he being only the sthrange man at

the Inch, after all, I thought I could forestal him; and so, Miss Anny, at the time I came up wid ye, there were five or six sthrong young men from Wind-gap, lying in the ditch, that's now over your head. For although I always had a mind to thry aisy manes, I thought, at that present time, that if the sthrange man shewed any fight against me, in your regard, one whistle on my finger would make him be tumbled head over heels into the river. But we were not called on to attempt that; and we have our own way, any how, widout it; and that's the aisiest way; and the best way, too; for as I often said afore, the aisy way is the best way."

"Good old man," cried Anny, "I could almost kneel to you, to thank you."

"And very sorry I'd be," said Maurteen Maher, "to see you spiling your nice white gownd, goin' on your knees wid it, on the grass, for a sarvice not worth a *thraw-*

neen. But you, Grace Carroll, have *you* never a word for me?" suddenly asked the Mayor.

"Me! me! Maurteen Maher — me! Mayor o' Wind-gap—" cried Grace, not yet quite unpuzzled from her late dilemma— "Och! what can I say or do? what can I do wid myself at all?"

"Well, well, don't thry to spake a word, a cuish-la, if that's what plases you best; and don't be so foolish either, ma colleen; sure he couldn't ate the two o' ye, at the one meal, any how; you may b'lieve my word, tisn't yourself he'd choose to begin with, if he was ever so hungry."

"Night an' day, noon and mornin', I'll be offerin' up my prayers for you, Misther Maher," said Grace Carroll.

"That same will do me no harm, a cuish-la; but now I'll tell ye both what I think; we are nigh hand to the houses, an' there would be a hulloloo, and a high clappin' of

hands over all Wind-gap, far and near, if I was fool enough to shew my face among the people with Miss Anny Kennedy houlding one of my limbs, and Grace Carroll amost pulling the other out o' my body; let me see if ye can stand alone."

"Oh! do not leave us, my good friend!" besought Anny.

"I'll hould my hould;" said her companion.

"By the thruth o' a man," smiled Maurteen, "I wish in my heart I was young an' well lookin', for your sake, Grace Carroll; and I wish I was the same, over again, and dhrivin' a gilt coach and six, for your sake, Miss Anny. I have no notion at all to go from ye, my darlins; but, let me tell ye, I must mind myself well, because people look up to me; and I never could hould rule in Wind-gap, if the neighbors were to see me, walkin' in among 'em, gall-vantin' the both of ye, in this manner. I'll stay wid

ye, ma-vourneens, only I'll be a little way, off; there's nothing to be afeard of now; and if ye can walk widout staggerin' like people in liquor, I'll go on afore ye, an' ye can follow in my steps."

The experiment was tried, and mistress and maid discovered that they could get on very well without support; they entered a suburb street, at the foot of the ascent to the Mayor of Wind-gap's dominions.

"Come after me, if it be plasing to ye, Miss Anny," resumed his worship, "and you too, Grace Carroll, come after me into the house you'll see me enter, I've something to say to the both o' ye."

They obeyed his directions; half way up the hill, he led the way into a very comfortable looking cabin; and here Gregory Roche, the junior Mayor's counsel, welcomed them with many bows and scrapes, and dusted with his weaver's apron, two chairs, and placed them for the visitors.

"Now, Gregory, go into your work—I want to have some discoorse, here, with Miss Anny; and when I cough, come out again, and shew us your manners, if nothing else, as well as you know how."

"Mayor of Wind-gap, I'll be led and said by you, and for why not? Young lady, I wish health an' happiness to you; Jeffery Carroll's niece, God be wid ye;" and the mannerly Gregory bowed himself away.

"An' now, Miss Anny," continued Maurteen Maher, "I brought ye here for two reasons; first, that ye might rest yourself; rest will be good for you, before you go through the town; for I saw you were sorely frightened a little while agone—"

"Oh indeed, indeed I was," assented Anny.

"And I don't wonder; and it isn't to frighten ye more, that I am goin' to spake further to ye; but I want to put you on your guard, Miss Anny—You'd do a right thing

to stay within your dour, for the present. You are not the kind of a body that would come to much good, by often crossin' the path o' the sthrange Man o' the Inch, or to let him be crossin' yours."

"What can you mean? This is very foolish, or very terrible indeed."

"Don't let the words give ye terror, Miss Anny, for all that—for I'll tell ye something more; you may place your dependence on me; I have knowledge over him, and I have power over him; and I'll use the one, and the other, in such a way that he can never do you a harm. But we'll have some speech on this head another time; and that time must not be far off neither. But for the present time, there's other business. The second reason why I brought you in here was, because I had some news to tell ye, Miss Anny, and you too, into the bargain, Grace, on the head of one Peggy Carroll.

The two girls started, and put many questions to Maurteen.

"She is safe, and sound, and well,"—answered the Mayor, smiling; without hurt or sorrow, beyond the fright she got; only *that's* enough to make her remember the Man of the Inch, to her dyin' day; and it will give you faith in me, on your own account, Miss Anny, and 'twill make ye b'lieve I can do things other people cannot do, when I tell ye the Mayor of Wind-gap saved Peg Carroll from that very man."

Grace Carroll asked no questions, uttered no words, but ran to the Mayor, threw her arms around his neck, and kissed him until he was tired of the pastime.

"Come, come, Grace," he said, "we must behave ourselves dacent—you'll get a disrespectful name among the neighbors; there, ma-colleen, sit down, and listen to all about it."

And poor Grace resumed her seat, wiping

the tears from her eyes with her apron, and giggling, blushing, and ashamed of her ecstacics.

In great astonishment, Anny Kennedy enquired how he had been able to accomplish his good work?

"I have a notion," answered Maurteen, "that Peggy Carroll will tell her own story in the best fashion, and more to your likin' than I could."

"She is here! she is in this house!" cried Anny, springing from her seat, while Grace pranced wildly round and round her mistress, laughing loudly, and of course clapping her hands.

"She is undher this roof, of a sartainty," answered the Mayor; "before it came to my knowledge that you and Grace there—(Grace, you big omadhoun, behave yourself quiet, I bid ye)—were goin' to Juff Carroll's [illegible] was my mind to be wid him afore ye, and let him into the sacret; but ye put the thought out o' my head, for that

present time, and though Peggy slept here the best part o' last night, I wouldn't undecaive Juff airly in the morning, because he would then go wid his complaint to that ould *gommulagh* the Mayor o' the town, and so the Man o' the Inch would guess Juff knew where she had been taken to, and that wouldn't be the safest way—howsomever, poor Juff will soon larn all about it, and his ould heart set at ease—and it would never do to take Peggy to her father, for there might be a watch set for her, thereabouts, and she can keep close here for a while, and no one the wiser."

The sage Mayor coughed twice, very audibly, as he finished this explanation; and the mannerly Gregory Roche accordingly re-appeared, ushering in the emancipated damsel, who was instantly in the arms of her foster-sister, and nearly as instantly in those of her real blood relation, Grace.

"There's a kind of a bird," the Mayor

went on, when the simple transports of this re-meeting had been interchanged—"that tells me of many things that happen, and many things that will happen—whether its a jackdaw, or a magpie, or a *shawneen-black-cap*, makes no maxim; but I knew before it came to pass what was to happen to poor Peggy"—(here, even his faithful historians half doubt the assertions of the Mayor of Wind-gap—but let that pass)—"and to be sure, if I had a likin' for such kind o' ways, I might have got some of my boys together, and given a good **lamb-basting* to some of the people that wanted to take her away—and so have kept her from their hands by main force, in the first going off. But Maurteen Maher has a way of his own, in the doin' of these things; any fool can fight; but the plan that does what you want without fighting, and in an aisy, quiet way, with a

* Thrashing.

little thought in it, is more to my notion. And so, now, Peggy, *malurna*, tell all about your misfortunes and your scrapes."

A few words are enough to condense Peggy's recital of her adventure. She went homeward from the excelling bonfire at Wind-gap, still agitated even to fear, by the actions, and more particularly by the words, of the strange Man of the Inch. At the moment of offence, she did not recognize the person of her tormentor, as a universally dreaded individual; but the strange man, upon occasions when he had encountered her near her father's house, at the river side, had previously expressed himself in a similar way; and Peggy, therefore, concluded that the individual who broke up the enjoyment of her dance on St. John's Eve, could be no other than the way-layer of her private walks; for, to aid her opinion, although his face and person were well disguised, some tones of the voice carried

conviction to her heart. Therefore she had screamed aloud, during the festivity of the bonfire, but she mentioned no name; and when the Mayor's bailiff, and his attendant came to her assistance, she could identify her troublesome neighbour only by pointing in a terrified manner at him; so that when the strange Man of the Inch, and with him his most zealous associate, were taken before the judgment-seat of the Mayor of Wind-gap, no one, before his disguise fell off, imagined whom they had to deal with, in the person of the chief prisoner.

Peggy and her father had just retired to rest, after the excitements of the evening, when the door of the cabin was broken open, and four men, disguised in masks and cloaks, bore her forcibly away.

Her eyes were uncovered, so that she could distinguish the road along which she was carried.—She arrived at the house of the Inch, but was not immediately conveyed

into it. A door, in one of the enclosing walls of its premises, opened for her; she entered a garden, and was locked into a turret, or summer-house, as it was called, immediately over the river. In this position, Peggy abandoned herself to despair; when she heard a key turn in the lock of a door opposite to that through which she had been pushed into her unwilling retreat. The well-known voice of the Mayor of Wind-gap called upon her; she committed herself to his care; he locked his own door, as he called it, after him; descended three or four steps to the water; placed Peggy in a very small boat—indeed, a kind of Indian canoe; paddled silently and swiftly across the stream, to the opposite bank; hurried her through a long public promenade, at this time of night quite deserted; walked her through the whole of the town again, one side of the river to the other, and at last deposited her in the safe and respect-

able place of refuge in which our other friends have found her.

And, indeed, the Mayor of Wind-gap seemed not a little vain of the admiration of his tact, and ingenuity, and prowess, which this history impressed upon the minds of his hearers. Like most ambitious men, he wished to creep on, step by step, through society; and in the same way that he had at first puzzled the brains of the good people of Wind-gap, he seemed now delighted to astonish the comprehension of Anny Kennedy. Nor, if this were truly his view, can it be said that he was unsuccessful; for Anny had received as much proof of Maurteen's power to counter act, on the occasion of Peggy Carroll's abduction, the wiles and villainies of the strange Man of the Inch, as she could hope to have of his capability, according to his promise, of assisting herself in any case of emergency.

"And, oh! Mayor of Wind-gap," said

Grace, "whenever we get up in the mornin' from our beds, and whenever we lie down at night, it is we that will always be returnin' our thanks to you, and our prayers too, above, for your good health, and your long reign over Wind-gap!—and if there's ever a thing to do us hurt or harm in the town below, it's to you we'll come, and not to the foolish ould Mayor, that has only the name of a Mayor in that place."

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Connor Kennedy, a man of very considerable property, "in the town below," wished to have it understood that Anny Kennedy was the daughter of a distant relation, who had died in another country, leaving her to his care. But his tale was very generally discredited; and whispering rumours *would* say, that Mr. Connor Kennedy was himself the father of the fair Anny—although we regret to add, according to the

same authority, he had never been married to her unknown mother.

It will be recollected that the old story-tellers at the bonfire, at Wind-gap, spoke of one, who, having been rescued from penury by young Harry Stokesbury, had contrived to inherit the young man's paternal property, and also to espouse for himself the young lady intended as Harry's bride. The tragedy attending this double deception has also been talked over by the old people; and the needy cousin, reported to have acted so treacherously to his violent-tempered patron, was no other than Anny's guardian, or, as the case might really be, Anny's parent. Connor Kennedy recovered very slowly from the wounds inflicted on him by the outrageous Harry Stokesbury; but the shock sustained by his nerves, never of a strong texture, he was not able to throw off, Ever since, however, he had enjoyed the undisturbed possession of the wealth

so unfairly come by; to all of which, it was said, Anny was heiress apparent.

Notwithstanding his dreadful retaliation for the wrongs he had suffered, young Stokesbury's banishment from his home, and his subsequent trials, and miserable death, created considerable sympathy in his favour. Many indeed thought that the treachery to which he had been a victim gave ample warrant for any species of revenge on the person of its author; so that Connor Kennedy was scarce regarded, by the generality of his neighbours, in any other light than that of a wily, ungrateful, and perhaps only sufficiently punished, man.

It was now twenty years since Stokesbury's last fearful visit to his cousin; and, during the whole of this long period of time, Connor Kennedy had lived on, under the odium attached to his name, without any effort to win the world's better opinion. He had no friends, he had not even acquaintances, he gave no invitations, and he got none; he sel-

dom stepped over the threshold of his door, even for the purposes of exercise; his domestic habits, so far as they could be known, were gloomy, ascetic, and very frugal: and from this last circumstance—his expenditure being so far within his income, it was conjectured that, apart from the proceeds of his rent roll, he had been annually acquiring personal property to a great amount.

Upon the evening of the day during which the occurrences last related had taken place, George Blundell sought admission at Connor Kennedy's door. His features, generally pale, were now pallid; much suffering was marked upon them, and his movements displayed that languor which proceeds from the mind, and which not the most painful bodily fatigue can occasion. He enquired if he could see Miss Kennedy, and, without receiving a direct reply, was shewn into an empty parlour. Here he continued for some time alone, now pacing

about the apartment, now abruptly flinging himself into a chair, and now standing up, again, to repeat his impatient tour round a table, which stood in the middle of the floor. The door at length opened —George Blundell started, in great agitation: a blush of eagerness overspread his face, but soon subsided, and his brow darkened with displeasure, as Connor Kennedy half crept in, peering around him, in his usual nervous and suspicious manner.

Connor Kennedy was tall and thin; pale and sharp featured; stooped in the shoulders; and characterised by a weak half-shut, unsteady eye, and by an almost cringing of step and action, which, to many, indicated the mean stealthiness of his nature, and illustrated his capacity for committing the crimes laid to his charge. But, notwithstanding his present appearance, Connor Kennedy was known to have been very handsome in his youth.

George Blundell was not ignorant of the character attributed to the man now before him; and, in reference to the subject which engrossed the lover's mind, had been prepared, from the moment he entered the parlour, to regard him with doubt and suspicion. Yet he bowed low to Mr. Kennedy; and Mr. Kennedy, with a drooping of the eye, seemingly most melancholy, and with his habitual, though tepid smile, which had neither mirth nor happiness in its meaning, bowed even more profoundly, and even humbly, to his visitor.

"I wish you a very good evening, Mr. Blundell," he said, in a voice so low, though it was his common one, that it scarce rose above a whisper, "will you take a chair, and be seated."

George Blundell silently obeyed. Connor Kennedy took another chair some distance from him, placed the palms of his hands on his knees, to support his droop-

ing person, and fixed his eyes on the carpet.

There was an embarrassed pause, as if both felt unwilling to commence a disagreeable discussion: at length Mr. Kennedy spoke, but without glancing at the person he addressed.

"I believe, Mr. Blundell, your visit was not particularly meant for me—" yet still he smiled, in his habitually timid way.

"In entering your house, sir," answered George Blundell—"I always feel of course the greatest pleasure when we meet; yet, on this particular occasion, I will not deny that my first object was to have the honour of speaking a few words with Miss Kennedy."

"Yes—ay—so I have learned; that is—the servant—that is—I mean—Miss Kennedy — that is—Mr. Blundell—I am sure you will agree with me—one is sometimes obliged to discharge rather unpleasant duties

—and in fact, Mr. Blundell—you are yourself aware—that—"

Mr. Kennedy stopped speaking altogether—George Blundell, in expectation of some distant remark or proposition, remained as silent as he. There was another long and disagreeable pause; Mr. Kennedy chose to resume.

"But, Mr. Blundell, although duties are unpleasant—they must be fulfilled, Mr. Blundell;—and it gives me the greatest pain—indeed, Mr. Blundell, it does pain me exceedingly — to be obliged to say—that—"

He stopped a second time, as if at a loss for words, or as if too physically nervous to summon them up at his will, and for his purpose.

"What *do* you mean, Mr. Kennedy?" at length demanded George Blundell, in a sonorous voice, tired as well as agitated with his host's hesitation. "Do you wish

to tell me that Miss Kennedy will not see me? is that, sir, the intelligence you want to communicate?"

"Exactly so, Mr. Blundell — exactly so—"

"And I thought as much, Mr. Kennedy, when you first came into the room"—

"I am sorry, very sorry indeed, Mr. Blundell; as by the tone of your voice, I judge that her wish may prove disagreeable to you—but, Mr. Blundell —"

"Well, sir, well?"—demanded George, getting very impatient.

"That is—Mr. Blundell — I hope and trust that you will see yourself—that Miss Anne—should—ought to come to this decision."

"What decision, Mr. Kennedy? tell me really what you mean?"

"Why—Mr. Blundell—you see—by my appearing here for her — that Miss Anne does not wish to see you herself."

"And why, Mr. Kennedy? why?" and George's voice began to rise, and his eyes to open more and more.

"I declare," said Mr. Kennedy, very mildly, "I have nothing very particular to say upon that point, that is—I suppose—Miss Anne would have come to you, if that is—if she really wanted to come—that is, Mr. Blundell, I mean to say—but—in the meantime, I beg leave to observe that—I have really nothing to say upon my own account, on the occasion."

"Pooh, sir, you know you represent Miss Kennedy here this evening."

"No, now, indeed, Mr. Blundell—I cannot in this instance, call myself—Miss Kennedy's representative;—and I beg you will understand that, very distinctly—if—Miss Kennedy acts at all expressively, in not seeing you, during this present visit of yours, it must be, I assure you, according to her own free choice; for I am but—a

—a weakly man, unfit for contests of any kind."

"Then, sir, in what light am I to consider you, appearing as you do for Miss Kennedy, if you do not appear as her representative?"

"Mr. Blundell—in that case you will please to consider me as something in the light of the young lady's confidante."

"Sir—I can see only a difference of terms;—Well, sir—apart from the business of this evening, I need not remind you that, as Miss Kennedy's *confidante,* you have always been quite aware of the understanding upon which you allowed my visits to your house?"

"Of course, Mr. Blundell—of course."

"Then, sir, upon what grounds do I so suddenly find my visits unwelcome?"

"I declare, Mr. Blundell, upon no grounds, that—to my own knowledge—I

can sufficiently explain but you may be aware that—"

"Mr. Kennedy"—interrupted George, "There is but one word can get us out of our present dilemma; she or you, or both together, have heard something to my disadvantage—have you, or have you not?"

"Why, Mr. Blundell, I declare to you"

"Have you, or have you not, sir?" repeated George, warmly.

"Oh, now, Mr. Blundell, pray do not agitate yourself; but—perhaps I may as well own to you that something of the kind, though I do not know exactly what, has been spoken of through the house."

"And what is it?" demanded George.

"Oh—Mr. Blundell—you know I before told you that I did not quite understand its nature."

"Very well, sir—but are you then astonished that I should want to come to the

question with Miss Kennedy, if you chose to evade it? Mr. Kennedy," he continued, almost with an air of distraction, you know, or you ought to know, that my preservation, or destruction, depends upon you."

"Oh, now, young gentleman, do not be so impetuous, I pray you; impetuosity often leads to very dreadful consequences."

"I do not intend, Mr. Kennedy, to be impetuous—I should not wish to be so, for your sake—but I plainly see that some slander has done me wrong in this house; and here you come as the only person to meet me beneath its roof; and, now, I only implore you, most anxiously and humbly, to gain me one moment's interview with Miss Kennedy—Listen to me, sir, a little farther, before you answer;—age must ice my manner, and manacles must confine my limbs, before I could quietly rest one instant under Miss Kennedy's unfavourable opinion."

"I am a man of a weakly constitution, Mr. Blundell; violence always makes me nervous; be patient, my good young gentleman, be patient."

"Mr. Kennedy—I have spent many hours, trying to temper down the very violence of which you speak, and I am sure, I am at last patient, and not violent; but if I am now denied the opportunity of vindicating myself, in Miss Kennedy's opinion, against an unknown—that is against an unadmitted charge, should you wonder, sir, if my naturally hot temper, as you all call it, should cease to be patient?"

"Truly, truly, Mr. Blundell—I do not know how to act."

"Act then, sir, as any man ought, who feels for the real unhappiness of another.—Mr. Kennedy," he continued, becoming, perhaps, absurdly energetic, as he knelt on one knee—"I humble myself to you, as I thought I never could to mortal man, and

I implore you, sir, not to permit me to leave this house without the explanation I ask you for!"

Mr. Kennedy glanced upward one instant from the carpet, " Rise, Mr. Blundell, rise, I beseech you, sir———" he touched George's hands, and feeling their resistance to his appeal, again looked into the young man's face; and now so intently, that George, from all his previous appreciation of the recluse's character, was struck with the expression of his glance.

" If your heart has not been hardened from your birth, sir, you will pity me," resumed George.

" Oh God forbid, that such a heart, or such a nature, were ever mine! ejaculated Mr. Kennedy. " But go to your chair, Mr. Blundell, or we can never continue our conversation." — George re-seated himself. " Mr. Blundell, I do not bring any charges against you—understand me in that, I beg

of you; but candidly do you think—and answer me candidly, I know you will,—that under present circumstances, Miss Kennedy ought to meet you?

"Ought to meet me, sir? ought to meet me?—but all these words are idle. You of all men, Mr. Kennedy, should not—but no I will not retort. I am hot-headed, sir, if you wish; forgive me. I will be quite candid with you.—I do suspect, notwithstanding all you say, that your opinion has influence over Miss Kennedy—and that you have advised her to deny herself to me this evening; your very manner tells me so; and I can only again beg of you as the most humble beggar could for a half-penny, to gain me ten minutes' conversation with her."

Mr. Kennedy rose from his chair, much agitated;—he perceived that it was by a great effort that the young man curbed his impassioned feelings.

"Well then, I will go to Anny, Mr. Blundell, and"

"You will use your influence in my favour? say you will!" cried George once more impetuously.

"Now, Mr. Blundell, you alarm me; I cannot tell why; but I am not a strong man, and you alarm me!"

"It is not my intention to do so, sir; I would rather again supplicate your compassion in the most humiliating way—but tell me, sir, am I to see Anny? for"—George muttered, or rather growled, "I do not know how I may abide a refusal"

"Well, Mr. Blundell,—if my interference can avail, Anny will come to you; and so, a good evening—a very good even ing to you, Mr. Blundell."

"You promise me, sir, do you not?"

"Why yes, if she come at my bidding. I do promise you—" and Mr. Kennedy timidly bowed himself out of the room.

This was palpably a constrained consent, whether against his conviction of

what was right, or from some other cause, we do not say. After his agitated and almost trembling exit, George Blundell fixed his eye upon the door, which he had cautiously closed after him, and strained his ears, listening to every step and noise through the house. A full quarter of an hour elapsed, and still he was alone. At length the door briskly opened; an elderly woman who, as George was aware, filled a confidential situation in the Kennedys' establishment, came courtesying towards him, evidently under the influence of terror. George Blundell frowned again, confronted her, and looked his enquiry.

"My young mistress bid me say to you, sir," hastily began the messenger of bad tidings,——and she, like her master, hesitated and stopped.

"Say what to me? that she will not come to see me? is that your message?"

"Mr. Connor Kennedy—"

"Go on, woman,—what of him?"

"Why, sir, if Miss Anny came at all, sir, it wouldn't be to her own liking that she'd come."

"But she would come, only for Mr. Kennedy?"

"It isn't all on't, that, sir; but——"

"No matter," interrupted George Blundell, "I see there is equivocation on all hands: tell Mr. Kennedy, and tell Miss Kennedy—but, no; say nothing to them—they shall hear of it in another way." And he hurried out of the house.

CHAPTER VIII

THE morning after this occurrence, Anny Kennedy was formally summoned to a conference with the Mayor of Wind-gap, upon very important business, as the messenger informed her. Immediately descending, she found his Worship in the same parlour whence George Blundell had so hastily made his departure the evening before.

"A bright good morning to your hand some face, Miss Anny," he began, smiling very cordially.

"Good morning to you, my honest friend," answered Anny.

"Och! there's a cloud darkening your young brow," continued Maurteen; "and there's a blight stealing on your young heart, and more's the pity; but never give grief the mastery over ye, my purty young crature: it would be a sore thing to see the may-bush withered in its blossoming."

Anny sighed dolefully, but made no other answer.

"If it could be helped, Miss Anny, I'd go a good long way, afore I'd add any thing to your throuble."

"Is it of that evil man at the Inch that you have come to speak to me, good father? I understood from you that we were soon to have more explanation about him?"

"In thruth, then, it is to spake consarning him that I am here to the fore this morning, Miss Anny."

"Go on, then, at once, I beseech you," cried Anny, eagerly.

"Don't give up to greater fear than there is a need for, my purty young lady; the biggest reason why I did not like to open all my mind to you yestherday, was, because something I had to say was for your own self alone."

"Oh! I have not slept last night, thinking and dreaming of him! every time I closed my eyes his disagreeable image was before me."

"People is fools enough to say, Miss Anny,—though I don't think, in my own mind, there's much sense in the saying, that the young girl his look fixes on ought to be on her guard."

"What can you mean?" demanded Anny slowly; "do you suppose he would dare to——"

"In thruth I don't, *Ma lanna*," resumed Maurteen, as she paused, answering her un-

expressed meaning;—"but, Miss Anny, 'tis an ould maxim with me, this many a year, to make provision against the worst that can come round; and when I go according to the maxim, my mind and myself, of course, along with the mind, then jogs on asy and quiet, ever and always. But it's my hope and belief that nothing like the worst, or half of the worst can come next, or nigh, you; for, as I tould you, undher the roof of my counsel's house, on Wind-gap hill, I have the power to make that man, wicked as he is, and much as he frightens other people, give you up into my hands, even though you might be in his"

"Yes, I remember you said so."

"Well, my purty Miss Anny, I could say no more till we were together, and nobody by. Now I'll say that more—d'ye see this paper, Miss Anny?" he continued, holding before her eyes something like a sealed letter.

"I certainly do see it," assented Anny.

"The writing that is inside of this I penned down with my own hands; and there's no one in the world wide knows what the writing manes, but myself only; and the writing is for you, Miss Anny."

"But what *are* the contents of the paper?" she asked.

"That you are not to know, my purty lady: but I'll tell you what use you're to make of it; only, afore I do that, you must give me a vow; aye, as binding a vow as if you swore upon the blessed book!"

"This is very strange! what is the nature of the vow?"

"You must vow to me before the good heaven that loves you, and takes care of you, my purty child,—that no eye but your own shall ever see this paper, even the outside of it, barring the time comes to put it to a right use; you must vow to me that you will never open it yourself, nor give it

any other to be opened, barring you give it to the only one I penned it down for; and you must vow to me, too, that if a time never comes to hand it over to that one, you will return it to me, safe and sound, as I will give it to you."

"And who is it for, and to whom am I to deliver it? and when am I to deliver it?"

"It is for the sthrange Man o' the Inch, my purty lady, and no other eye but his is to see it, outside or inside; and no hand but his is to touch it, except your own . and you are never to deliver it to him until you're alone with him, much against your will, and in some fear and trembling of him; and when it's come to the last moment with you, and when no door is left open for you; and it's then you are to deliver it to him, with mannerly compliments from Maurteen Maher, the Mayor of Windgap."

"My good man, how you confound and

terrify me! is it indeed possible that you can calculate such a situation for me?"

"The Lord above keep you far from it!" answered Maurteen; "and in thruth, no, Miss Anny, I don't talk of it at all as a thing that's sartain sure to happen; and you'd obleege me by not given' yourself distress by taking me up in a mistake;—but I tould you my maxim,—'fore-warned, fore-armed.' Be ready for an evil day, and an evil day will most likely keep from you. So, take the paper,—it won't hurt or harm you; it won't bite, or bruise, or burn you. And there's another maxim I go by,—that as long as there's a purse in the chest, the owner of it need'nt go without his dinner barrin' he's mighty fanciful intirely."

"Well, then, give me the paper."

"Give *me* the vow first, my purty hony."

"The vow! I really forget it now."

"Well, and it won't take much breath or time to put it into your head again;"

and Maurteen, in a most distinct tone, repeated the terms of the proposed engagement.

"Put your little white hand over the good little heart that's beating in your body, and promise me, as you're God's own child, and hope to find favour in his sight, that you will observe every word of that vow."

Anny Kennedy performed the action, and gave, solemnly, the solemn promise required of her.

"Here, then, Miss Anny, take the paper into your keeping at last; and remember, of all things, that it comes back to my hand, if the time never falls out for giving it as 'tis directed. Cast your eye over the writen' on the outside."

Anny did observe the superscription on the rudely-folded and clumsily-sealed packet, hoping to learn the name, at least, of a dreaded person; but she only read, to "The sthrange man of the Inch," in-

scribed on the official document in very stiff and formal characters.

"Hide it, Miss Anny, and hide it up safe; who knows but it may be worth more nor a sack of goold to you, if the need comes to part with it!"

"Heaven defend me!" resumed Anny, still gazing on the strange credentials in her favour; "it is very alarming, that a man of sense, like you, Maurteen Maher, should really think such precaution necessary on my behalf."

"There is an ounce, or so, of sense in our head, we b'lieve, according to what the neighbours say; but, have a reliance on me, Miss Anny; remember what I have done for Peggy Carroll, and 'twill go hard if I don't do more for your sake. Depend upon it, I'll keep my little *Birdeen* flyin' to and fro, for the bare life; and I'll twist the neck of him,—and, by coorse, the head follows the neck,—if he does'nt do his duty by you

and by me. When your affairs ought to keep me waken', there will be no sleep on my eyes, any how."

Anny, still much puzzled and alarmed, renewed her expressions of thanks to his mysterious mayorship.

"Well," continued Maurteen, rubbing down his knee with his hand; "now that we have that matther settled, sure there's another little thing I want to be spaking about, Miss Anny; for it was'nt intirely on the head o' the paper and the sthrange man, that I made so bould as to sit down all alone wid you, this morning."

"I know you are my friend, Maurteen," answered Anny, "and I will attend, carefully, to whatever you have to say to me."

"Listen, then, Miss Anny. The evening o' yestherday was a very fine evening, about Wind-gap; the smell o' the new hay would have refreshed your heart, young and fresh as it is, already, not to say as if it was

as ould as mine; and there wasn't a breath of wind stirring the laves upon the threes; and the sun, when he was setting, made the sky, to the west, look as rosy as the blooming on your own soft cheek. Well, when I am a walking down by the river side on such an evening as that was, with my fishing rod in my hand, I have no envy to the greatest king that ever sat upon a throne. Of a surety, there isn't over much care to my lot,—I give thanks for the same; but, whenever care or throuble does come to me, it goes away, somehow, from my side, as I saunther along by the banks of the paceful wather; and it's a thruth, Miss Anny, take it from my lips, that a sthroll along that grassy bank, about the hour o' the sunset, will do more than make a sorrowful heart happy; it will make a happy one happier—aye, and still more than that, 'twill smoothen the wrinkle on the angry man's brow, and it will stale out of the breast of the

worldly màn, in a long sigh, his envy, or his ill-will to his neighbour.

" Well, again, Miss Anny ; we had a fine soft summer's evening, the last evening that's gone by ; there were children laughing out loud and playing about on the hill side, and there were ould people a-sitting down to rest themselves ; and they looked for all the world as if the evening of their life was the evening that the heavens sent shining and smiling all around them in pace, and in quiet, and in pleasure. But there was one man, Miss Anny, and he was a young man, into the bargain ; and he ought to have been singing with the birds, and jumping through the grass, like the grasshoppers ; but he hurried along as if he was runnin' from himself ; and he was heedless of what was givin' the heart's joy to all others, and his brow was as dark as if a tempest had been peltin' on it ; and, when I looked upon him, I thought he was the more and more

angry, because the sunny sky did not look miserable, like himself. Can you give a guess, Miss Anny, who that young man was?"

"Indeed I — I really do not know," Anny blushed and stammered.

"Well, and I won't ask of you to make the guess, my purty lady. I'll only tell you myself. That young man was Masther George Blundell. I went along in his steps when he thought no eye was on him; and he flung himself down on the grass; and he threw out his arms from him, and he moaned, and he sobbed so pitifully that it would put affliction on your young heart to listen to him; and afther I watched him some time, he bounced upon his feet, and he looked with an evil eye upon the deep wather; and there was a sickness came over me, Miss Anny; for I guessed his meaning."

"What!" cried Anny starting up with clasped hands, and looking even more pale

and terrified than ever she had done at the strange man of the Inch.

Maurteen did not very immediately reply; at length he condescended to rejoin—"No, Miss Anny—my honey child; no; he did not make away with himself that time, praises be given. I went up to him, and I spoke to him. At the first he was angered against me; he commanded me to continue on my way; he said he knew nothing about me, and that he wanted to know nothing about me, and that he liked to be left alone. But I didn't quit him, Miss Anny; I spake softly to him, with a little sense, too, may be; indeed, and in thruth, I spoke to him like one who had a feeling for him; and I had the feeling for him: and so we sat down at last, on the soft sunny bank; and he took my two ould, hard, withered hands in his: and he tould me his griefs, and then he cried like a foolish little child, and I cried too, like a more foolish and a bigger one,—just to keep him company, I suppose."

"God bless you, good man!" murmured Anny.

"Miss Anny, there is a doom before that poor boy; and he must meet it, and soon too: but if he gets bravely through it, there's happiness in store for him at last,—and for some one else with him into the bargain."

"A doom, Maurteen? what doom?"

"Och! I said what was wrong—but the word came from my mouth without thinking, and I can't tell any more, only this; he was near his doom yestherday evening, but the heavens forbid that his death should be laid to you, Mavourneen!"

"His death! his death, laid to me?"

"Masther Blundell is a youth that has hot blood round his heart, Miss Anny; with some people the grief that falls on them falls like the spring shower, and they're the better for it when it has passed away; but this isn't the way with Masther George:

the grief comes to him like a winther tempest. His love is a scorching fire; and I'm thinking that if ever his hatred falls on any one, t'will be a witherin' blast. And so, Miss Anny, while we were sitting together by the river side, he made acknowledgment to me, that when I came up, his thought was tempting him to take one good jump into it: for he was disthracted, like, because you refused to see him, and to listen to him, Miss Anny; there was grief upon him, before he knocked at your dour, yestherday evenin', but when your word turned him away from it, it grew too much intirely for his nature to bear, although another body might be able to submit, like a christhin."

"But, Maurteen, I think I was right in refusing him, yesterday evening."

"I won't say all out, but that you did the right thing, Miss Anny; because all looks black against him; only, that is the

very rason why your anger came the sooner and the heavier on his heart. It is a great misfortune when the world turns against a man; but when our nearest and dearest turn with the world, och! my purty child, that's the heart-scalding, in downright, good arnest."

"Are you sure, asked Anny, unconsciously wrought upon by Maurteen's plausible pleadings, "that none of the wicked idea of yesterday evening remains in his mind?"

"I am, my purty young lady; he promised me that he'd pluck it up by the roots, and throw it from him—and I have a reliance on any promise out of George Blundell's lips. 'But I made him a promise, in return, howsomever; I promised him that I'd gain your lave and license for him to come to you, all alone, and to sit with you, all alone; that he may tell you something; and when I gave him my hand in pledge that I'd bring this about, he wanted

to go down upon his knees to thank me, and to pray for me; and in thruth I was ashamed to behould a gentleman like him goin' to demean himself before the likes o' me."

"Mr. Maurteen Maher," remarked Anny, now shaking off in a degree the effects of his worship's oratory, "it is my opinion that you might have condescended to consult me, as a party slightly concerned, before you gave that promise, and that pledge, so very confidently."

"Not a bit, my darlin' young lady—I knew well that you'd have the pity, if nothing else, in your heart for him, this morning; and that you'd give him the time and the place to say whatever he can in his own defence, in your hearing; for I knew you used to be just in your mind, as well as good in your nature; and you owed me allegiance, more betoken, as the Mayor o' Wind-gap; for though you are now livin' in the bailiwick of that poor soft-headed

cratur, in the next sthreet, you passed the airliest and some of the happiest of your days undher my rule, when you were fosther-child to Juff Carroll's good woman, that's now no more, and fosther-sister, into the bargain, to little Peggy Carroll, the purtiest and the best girl I govern over, except yourself, Miss Anny, and that I saved for you only the day afore yestherday, because she let me take my own way; the same that I ask you to let me do, this present moment."

"Well, Mr. Mayor," answered Anny, gloomily smiling at this transcendently ingenious personation—"I yield you my allegiance, at least; but still I am convinced that I ought not, under present circumstances, to hold intercourse with Mr. George Blundell. Apart from the undefended charges against him, he has given me new cause for displeasure and estrangement; yesterday evening, here in this very parlour, he insulted my guardian, Mr. Kennedy."

"My darlin', purty young crature, the scalded heart makes a fool of the poor young head. When you refused to come down to him, the boy did not know what he was sayin' or doin'; moreover, how do you know but what he wants to say to you, quite alone, between yourselves, may have something to do with them charges you spake of?"

"It would be wrong—very wrong to see him," deliberated Anny.

And what has further been predicated of the woman who deliberates? Maurteen Maher knew, though he had never read the Poet's line;—and when he saw that he had thus virtually gained his point, he did not go on arguing after convincing; he did not enter into the question of the propriety or impropriety of granting the boon he solicited, he only appealed to her compassion, representing the consequences likely to ensue should she persist in her refusal; and

finally, he obtained her full consent to a private interview with George Blundell; and left the house to communicate to his young protegé, his good tidings, with as brisk a step, and in as high spirits, as if he had succeeded in gaining, after a hard battle, some great personal favor for himself.

Declare, oh Rochefaucauld! how much, or how little of poor old Maurteen Maher's vanity, in his diplomatic talents, mingled with his feelings of justice and of benevolence, on this occasion!

CHAPTER IX.

It is evident that the circumstances under which the young people once again saw each other alone, were embarrassing. Anny felt it to be her duty, in the fullest sense a woman can do so, distinctly and unequivocally to dismiss George Blundell; for as she has herself said, the associate of a desperate libertine, nay, the partaker of his guilt, ought not for an instant to continue to be to her even as an acquaintance. Yet,

you have said that, on my account, you would not enter the world with me, an object of neglect—I say for you, that I will not allow you, from this hour, any opportunity to tempt me to do so;—while the present cloud hangs over you, we must cease to be even private acquaintances—But rest satisfied with this assurance, I have loved you for you own qualities—and I will not now change towards you, because unmerited misfortune has placed you in questionable circumstances. I will not, now—I will not ever. I will love none other but you; I will wed none other but you. Brighter days must surely beam on us at last, and leave us free to smile at the social usages which at present doom our separation. I cannot, will not, believe but that you will soon become enabled to re-assert yourself in your own true character. But if," continued Anny, "and let my last words sink deepest in your memory,

"if time does *not* stand your friend; if you are too long kept down by the necessity of your strange lot, then, George Blundell, come to me again, and again call me your own, own Anny."

CHAPTER X.

The house at the Inch, the scene of the tragedy, with which we are becoming more particularly acquainted, was an old family mansion, built in the graceless style of architecture pretty generally adopted in Ireland in the beginning of Elizabeth's reign; a square structure, of which each side terminated in a pointed and towering gable, while each gable was surmounted by a formidable chimney. At that side, where

the stone-jambed, massive, hall-door gave entrance to the dwelling, the windows had been placed with some degree of uniform arrangement; but at its other sides they were up and down, here and there, great and small; as if, after the first construction of the house, whim or necessity, rather than pre-concerted design, had dictated their relative positions. The walls were very massive, and all the principal rooms wainscoated.

Into the largest room of the second story of this famous house, we now enter, upon a visit to its as famous present proprietor.

The furniture around us is old, lumbering, and much decayed. The walls and floor of the apartment itself have been but indifferently reclaimed from a former state of almost dilapidation; and, although four large wax tapers burn on a carved table in its centre, there is the uncomfortable air of a mixture of luxury and unfitness, of ornament and blemish, nay, even

of the want of order, or of common attention to order, visible at every side.

"The strange Man of the Inch" sat alone at the massive carved table. A half-drained silver goblet, richly chased, was before him. The bottle from which he had filled it, and another, which he had previously emptied, were to his hand; and a delf mug, with a handle near the neck—one of those called a "grey beard"—stood in the middle of the board.

An embroidered purple velvet cap, sat, not inelegantly, on his head. He was regaling himself with a gigantic pipe, which, after many convolutions, rested on the floor at his feet; it was indeed a machine of exotic fashion, and formed, in the eyes of his neighbours, one of the objects which, taken as appendages to him, challenged their curiosity and enquiry, if not their fears. His brow was closely knitted over his deep, black eye, as if, even in solitude,

it would hide and concentrate its own meaning; while, ever and anon, he puffed from his curving lip, the vapour of perfumed tobacco.

The door of the apartment slowly, and, it might be said, sneakingly opened. "The strange Man" turned towards it his keen, searching eye. A tall and bulky fellow, enveloped in a large, loose wrapper of blue freize, which disguised his person, stood beyond the threshold.

"So, Bourke!—is that you?—Advance;" said the "strange Man," sonorously.

His clumsy visitor, plodding forward with a heavy step, removed his slouched hat from his bushy brow.

"Sit you down, sit you down, Bourke," continued the "strange Man," pointing to a seat distant from the table;—"Sit down, and make love to 'grey beard.'"

"*Dhar-a-loursa!* * an' who'll say it isn't

* An imprecation.

the mouth-wather that hasn't its match ?"—the man remarked, after he had applied the mug to his lips, and gulped a sufficient quantity of its contents:—"An' I'll let out the thruth; the love an' the likin' that I have for it, * *bates Bannachar*"—and to exemplify his statement, he once more pressed his lips to the lips of the "grey beard." He then rested the vessel on the table, embracing it with his great hands as if he claimed it as his own, smacking his mouth, and grinning hugely and hideously.

The "strange Man" smoked on, without a change of countenance, as if abstractedly, or indifferently, or perhaps contemptuously, though without the expression of that feeling. Bourke fixed his large grey eyes upon him, and, by degrees, also grew serious. There was silence for some time. At length the "strange Man's" glance suddenly encountered that of the other, and in a loud,

* Goes beyond expression.

sharp voice, while he struck his foot upon the floor, he as suddenly demanded—"Bourke! is there a traitor among ye?"

"By the gor," answered the fellow, collectedly, although at first he had been rather startled—"not to my knowin,' or to the knowledge of me, masther."

"Not to your knowing!—Are you not certain?—positively certain, one way or the other?"

"I'll take book-oath on it,—an' may this **lauchy* liquor be my pison, afore I close an eye, if I'm tellin' you a word of a lie, at the prasent time."

"And you have not discovered who pirated the girl from the summer-house, in the garden, where she had been so safely stowed away?"

"No, masther; we lost all marks and tokens of her in the town. But wait a bit, wait a bit; all is not lost that's in danger;

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* Lovely—generous.

and what a body can't see a good way off to-day, becase there's bad weather between a body and it, a body may be able to see to-morrow, when the sun takes away the clouds, and lets a body's eyes do their naathral business."

"Bourke — there is some one on the watch, that we don't count among ship's crew. There is some stranger, I tell you, knows more of our tacks than he ought to know. I ask you again, sirrah,—and now have a care of your answer—Is there, or is there not a skulking traitor amongst you?"

"*Dhar-a-loursa* — A thraithor! — What business would such a one have to be rubbin' to us?—Would he see the sun two mornin's afther we found out what he was, I wondher?" And, to intimate his meaning, he slowly took out of his bosom a large, clumsily-shaped pistol, laid it on the table, and scowled at it:—"And let him be ould Nick, ould Nick's mother, or even a christhin,

of any sort, that is lookin' too close at us, I'd have him be on his guard, masther, honey."

"Bourke! had I time to spare for him, he should not, whoever he is, long remain hidden from me, were the earth heaped five fathoms above him. But for the present we must content ourselves with knowing that there *is* some meddling eye fixed on us, and watching our motions; that there *is* some clever hand,—(or at least some hand that thinks itself clever) — interfering in our affairs; and *that* is quite enough to make me push on the matter we have last been speaking about, with the more speed and spirit. Bourke, I can afford no longer delay. By the time I have mentioned, *that one* must be safely conveyed to the place you know of."

"I'd wager a silver shillin' against a brass farthin," answered Mr. Bourke, "that the boy that 'ud thry to keep her from us

might have a chanch of getting his garthers knotted round his throat, instead of above his knee, jolly masther."

"Well, then; be prepared, all of you, ye scoundrels; and, mind me; there must be no bungling this time, if you wish to walk about the world with your heads on your shoulders;—do you hear me?"

"I do; and, by this blessed mouth-wather," pursued Bourke, again kissing the lips he adored most—"you may sleep asy on id, I tell you."

"And *I* tell *you*, man, that on this occasion I will not endure disappointment. I did not care a great deal for the loss of that other, whom ye all let slip through your fingers so confoundedly; and, therefore, I half forgave ye, and let ye go unpunished; but, at your peril, let me find neither treachery nor mismanagement in the business now in hand; if I should detect any such thing, it is not merely the loss of my bounty you

shall have to dread; but were there a dozen of you, each armed with a pistol, like that before you, loaded to the muzzle, and the muzzles of all pointed to my breast, every man of you should feel that I was still your master, and able to be quits with you."

"Shadhurth;—I'll dhrink to you on the bargain."

And here, because we do not very much relish their society, we will leave "the strange Man of the Inch" and his worthy associate to arrange their plans; and with the reader's permission, change the scene.

CHAPTER XI.

Anny Kennedy had not the slightest recollection of her father; and of her mother but a very dreamy one remained on her mind. She remembered a weeping, delicate female, taking care of her early childhood, whom she used to call mamma, and her most vivid reminiscences of this individual were mixed up with painful and mysterious feelings. She could relate her efforts to scramble up upon a bed, in which the lady lay, as it had

been her wont to do ; her agonies at having been held back by a mild, compassionate-looking man, whose kindness of manner, and whose endeavours to soothe her childish grief, partly reconciled her to the opposition she experienced from him. And Anny's memory was further strongly impressed with the mode finally adopted to console her: having succeeded in pacifying her a little, the gentleman led her back, repressingly, however, to the bed she had vainly tried to scale, and the person resting in it placed a ribbon round her neck, to which was attached a shining bauble that pleased her childish eye ; nor did Anny, at this day, forget the fervent kiss, and the straining embrace accompanying the gift.

Soon after this, she was led by the mild-looking man to a strange residence, of which the novelty, and, indeed, the splendour, delighted her ; but she grew tired of the excitement, and cried to be taken back to her

mother. This request was not, however, complied with; and she experienced, for some time, much misery; but, at last, she became unconsciously reconciled to the idea of a final separation. Anny yet wore the little present she had received from her dying parent: it was a very small double miniature, having on one side, as she had since been told, the portrait of her father, and, on the other, that of her mother; and she now distinctly understood that the placid man, who had gained such influence over her, at the moment of her infantine tribulation, at the bed-side of her dying mother, was Mr. Connor Kennedy, with whom she had since lived, who had adopted her as his daughter, and to whose considerable property she was to be sole heiress.

What object beneath the blessed sun is more lovely, more endearing, than that of a little child, bustling about, no matter how imperfectly, as to its success, but still con-

fidently full of a belief of its power to render to middle age its little services, in proof of its great love? If not the truest, is it not the purest, proof of the heart's affection? is it not an evidence, bursting out of the bosom of that child, of the great principle of its creation, and, only let the world not spoil it, of its eternally-willed destiny? If love be not the sole, true motive for our genuine attentions to one another, why should that little child so powerfully exemplify the fact that it is? The fairy creature is not yet tutored upon a necessity for pleasing;—it pleases because it is pleased: its little spirit is fresh from the impress, the caress, the embrace, of its God;—its God of love immeasurable! — that is, immeasurable by our mere human feelings of what *we* call love. Answer us, any one who is a parent, what love, at any more advanced period, is equal to the love of that little child?

Oh! it is indeed delightful to behold the innocent eyes, beaming with affectionate earnestness; the other little features sobered into business-like gravity, full of the importance of being occupied for one it loves; and then playing in brilliant joy when the labour of love is applauded by a kiss.

Much of this rather egotistical eulogy of childhood has been called forth by Anny Kennedy, and is, in a great degree, applicable to her. Even in her earliest days, the patient melancholy of Mr. Kennedy's countenance, its expression of a calm endurance of misfortune, excited Anny's unconscious sympathy, and her young heart felt, unknowingly, a claim preferred upon it for consolation. She would even now call to mind that the chief happiness of those days used to be caused by seeing her guardian's sad features relax into a smile, as the result of her efforts to soothe and please him.

As she grew up, Anny took delight in the performance of little personal services for him. She would be sure to run about the house to find his night-cap, and would arrange it on his head with her own little hands; she would kneel down and fit on his slippers; and, in her opinion, no one but herself could settle the cushions of his arm-chair, or place it in the exact spot he liked, either by the fire in winter, or near the window, overlooking the garden, in summer.

Upon the evening of the day of George Blundell's visit to her, as related in the last chapter, Anny and Mr. Kennedy were, as usual, enjoying each other's society; and they had been for some time discussing the nature of the present new position of her and her lover.

Even on this delicate topic, Anny saw no reason for disguising her thoughts from her guardian. There was something so soft

and touching about his manner and character, something so nearly resembling the gentleness of her own sex, that a confidence of a most unqualified nature had always existed between them. And, to assist in establishing this understanding, never had Mr. Kennedy used a word or a sound of harshness towards Anny ; and the idea of being reserved with him could not enter into her thoughts.

From the beginning of her intimacy with George Blundell, her guardian had scarce ever hesitated to question her upon the state of her feelings, nor Anny to express them. The last remarkable interview between the lovers was, therefore, talked over by Kennedy's fire-side, without, as we have before intimated, the slightest reservation, except, we are bound to admit, in one instance.

Anny had given her solemn promise that she would guard the secret of George Blundell's explanation of his intimacy with the

disreputable person lately come into their neighbourhood; and was compelled, therefore, to conceal the mystery from her old confidante.

"And yet, Anny, although you will not account to me why it is you are so satisfied of his innocence, yet you will have me go the full length of agreeing with you in your conviction of it."

"Exactly so, my dear sir."

"He has bound you to honourable secrecy?"

"He has, Sir: in my mind and heart I rely upon the statements George Blundell has made; and even if he had not wished me to guard his secret, there is that about it connected with my good wishes towards him, which I believe would seem to compel me to be as prudent on the matter, even with you, as you now find me."

"Anny, his wishing you to remain silent is, in itself, a circumstance full of suspicion,

poor Anny's heart sickened at this conviction; and final separation did not promise a less severe pang, because it became necessary to inflict it on herself.

Anny was seated, of course, at a small work-table, with an open book upon it, when George Blundell entered the room, the same, by the way, in which Mr. Kennedy had given him an audience. Immediately withinside the doorway, the young man paused, and looked deeply at her. Their eyes met. Anny had never seen her lover's face under the expression of every day merriment; she had beheld it, indeed, subdued into the gentle tenderness which her smiles could always induce; nay, when the fulness of his joy glowed in every feature she had called it in her own mind more than sunny radiant indeed, with the consciousness of a delightful interchange of undoubting affection. And, once before this day, she had even witnessed it clouded with suffering.

But, during the look which they now gave each other, the deep-seated agony expressed by George Blundell's countenance shocked her. As he advanced, she trembled, and was unable to rise from her chair, in the formal, yet easy, manner which she had planned.

George Blundell's words came in slow and melancholy, yet not inharmonious, cadences on her ear, like the music of a dirge.

"I perceive," he said, "my presence is painful to you; and I must therefore be the more grateful for the charity shewn me, in this permission to wait on you. However, as it is very probably the last time I shall so afflict you, I crave your indulgent hearing to what I have now to say. You reproach me with—"

"Mr. Blundell, it is not I who reproach you; nor is it my intention to do so even now; but—" she hesitated,

"What would you say? go on, dear Anny — but I am too bold in addressing you as familiarly as you have hitherto allowed me to do—am I not? I did not intend it, however, and I cannot help it; there would be something so hopeless in the sound of your name, uttered by my voice with a merely polite title before it, that my tongue refuses to make the attempt. But I ask your pardon—you stopped short in what you wished to say."

"Mr. Blundell, can you prove —*fully prove* your innocence of the things laid to your charge!"

"Anny Kennedy, I cannot," he answered slowly and miserably. "I can but make assertions to you."

"Then, sir," she resumed, rallying into spirit, "you will yourself admit the necessity of an immediate and final separation between us."

"Alas, Anny! you can find no one more ready to make that admission than I am—I do not blame you, Anny; far from it; I only blame my own fate, when I agree in the justice of the wretched sentence you pass upon me; when I myself declare that it is fit and proper you should draw back from me."

Now, although Anny had quite resolved to be stern and unflinching in her decree, it is singular enough that this ready acquiescence in it did not fail to pique her. As a matter of strict propriety, our gentle Anny determined upon dismissing her lover for ever; but her pride, and perhaps her vanity, were wounded at the thought that he allowed her manacles to drop too willingly from his hands; an argument, by the way, which did not shew that her own fetters were as loose as she might have chosen to imagine they were.

"So, sir, we have quickly come to an

understanding; and what necessity is there for a prolonged conference on this subject?"

Anny was now able to stand up.

"Do not so suddenly turn from me, Anny; permit me to fulfil the purpose for which I have intruded on you—I sought this meeting with one particular object in view; pray sit down again—or—you tacitly refuse me an opportunity for uttering a last word to you."

"Well, sir: for that alone—" and Anny resumed her judgment-seat with the severe dignity of a young "second Daniel.'—

"I will begin by saying, that I knew I never could be worthy of your love—"

"Indeed, Mr. Blundell? and should I then feel complimented that you have attempted—particularly since we all know the recent occurrences that surround you—to call forth my affection?"

"When I sought your love, my own dearest Anny, there was no stain upon me

—I could therefore not have doubted myself on that account. But this one point we will defer, if you please. Now I repeat, you act as you ought to do in receding from me. But, although I admit the justice and the necessity of my rejection, believe me, I shall experience no self-reproach in the agony to which for my life it must doom me. And Anny, dearest, it would be impossible I could live at all—indeed, life would be too oppressive a burden for me—did I not entertain the hope that your good opinion, your esteem, and your compassion will accompany me through my despair. No—indeed, Anny; nothing can soothe the peculiar misery of my lot, except the certainty that not only you do not think me the villain the world would represent me to be, but that you will pity me as the victim of that cold world's hasty opinion."

"Mr. Blundell, you have said you could give me nothing but assertions; well, sir;

do you assert yourself to be innocent of,—I must call them,—the crimes you are accused of?"

"Innocent! innocent! my beloved Anny, innocent!" he exclaimed.

"Then why are you the companion of that degraded man? why have I seen you in his company? why have I heard words pass between you? answer me," cried Anny, in rising hope.

"Anny," he replied, "you yourself have accused me, and I have been publicly accused, in this town, of having been a party to the abduction of your foster-sister, but, so help me heaven! I am as guiltless of that charge as yourself can be. As to the words you overheard, I was certainly presumptuous enough to speak of you, but without levity; without—"

"And you spoke of me to that man? you could mix up my name with his? how can you be connected with him, and still

expect to be known to me? Mr. Blundell, the recollection of that is sufficient to call on me, really, to end this irksome interview."

"All will be best understood, Anny, when you have heard a plain story; the story I am come here to tell."

"You have taken some time to introduce it, sir," she remarked, (little vixen).

"That's very probable," said George; "but now, not to tire you farther, I begin it, and, I hope, with it, my vindication."

"At my tenth year, I recollect myself living in a peasant's cottage. I was brought up with the children of the family, and after the same manner in which they were, except that I experienced a more embittered infancy and childhood. It was not concealed from me that a paternal roof did not cover me; but where I was to seek that roof no one would tell me. Before I was ten years old, I sometimes used to ask who were my father and mo-

ther? but the unkindly people at the cottage only laughed, at first, at my enquiries, or beat me for making them; until, at length, when I had tormented them beyond patience, they replied, to my young ears, that I was a child of whom my parents were ashamed, and whom they brought up for charity. In fact, Anny, I was considered as an incumbrance, in even that lowly house; and worse, they branded me with a disgraceful name: I was ill-treated by the old; I was scorned by the young. My nature was made morose, my temper sour, and often savage. My tender days were spent in wretchedness; and never since have I been able wholly to free my mind of the premature gloom and bitterness cast upon it by those early scenes.

"One lad only, in my neighbourhood, treated me with kindness; and I have often since thought that the heart within me must have become dead, as a kind of moral petrifaction, but that it expanded to him, in

return for his gentleness to me. Upon one occasion, when some four or five other boys were at play, and when I looked on, as was my custom, without playing with them, my generous friend was attacked, upon some misunderstanding, by a lad, stronger and older than himself. I took his quarrel upon me; and, although my antagonist was also my physical superior in every way, I had not time to count odds. Before that day, I had scarce ever stood up, on my own account, against an insult, because the consciousness of my humiliating position weighed me down like lead. But," continued George Blundell, interrupting himself, "I fatigue you, Anny?"

"No, no, no;—pray go on," she said.

"Well, I became the conqueror on this occasion; but I was sorely bruised and battered; and the little fellow, for whom I had fought, attended on me to cure my wounds. The other boys envied me for my success,

and, still retaining their malevolent uncharitableness against me, would provoke me into fresh quarrels. My blood got up, and I offered to encounter them all, one by one; but, out of their virtuous detestation, I suppose, they, at last, fell upon me, nearly all together, and I could only defend myself as well as I was able, against their united blows.

"During this unequal contest, I was unconscious that a stranger had been looking on, an unbiassed witness of the tyranny practised upon me, and of my vain efforts to resist it. But that stranger, to my astonishment, suddenly became my protector, judiciously using his cane to disencumber me of my cowardly assailants.

"When they had retired, and that we were alone, he enquired my birth and parentage. At first, I would not reply to him at all; gradually he drew reluctant and tearful, though true, answers from me. At my account, I saw him start and frown;

and then he took my hand, and asked me to lead him to the house where I resided. I did so,—we entered the mean abode. I was in rags, and otherwise very badly taken care of. I heard my mysterious protector disputing angrily with the proprietor of my churlish place of refuge. I heard my name mentioned, and understood that I was the subject of their debate. Finally, the stranger called me—his son! his lawful son, he said I was! Oh, Anny! when I heard this, I cannot tell you how my young heart exulted! and well do I remember the boyish assumption of lofty demeanour which I put forward, after *I* had summoned sufficient courage to call *him* father. Little shew of fatherly kindness did he then afford me; but his mere countenancing the poor despised boy was sufficient to arouse all the dormant fondness of my nature for him; and when he told me that his name was Blundell, and that I must forget that by

which I had hitherto been called, (the name of the family with whom I had been living) and assume his, I thought myself absolutely ennobled.

"My father immediately had me conveyed into a neighbouring village, and there he clothed me well, and fed me daintily; at his departure, which shortly after occurred, he placed me at a respectable school; and, two years afterwards, in my twelfth year, I was removed, at his command, though he did not then come back to me, to the college of this town. At our first meeting, he had told me he was a merchant, possessing great wealth in a foreign country; that he had left Ireland, while yet young, in consequence of my mother's death; that he had no child but me; and that I was to be the sole inheritor of a large fortune. I never questioned the truth of this story; and the liberal supplies of money regularly remitted to me, in his name seemed fully to prove it.

"For many years I did not again behold my parent; not, in fact, till about three months ago. Then, however, Anny, I received a message to attend him, at a house which he had just taken, in the neighbourhood of this city; and now, Anny, do you begin to pity me?"

"Are you at liberty to declare who he is?" asked Anny, growing very pale.

"I will declare it to *you*, Anny, at any risk," answered George Blundell, most sorrowfully, tears trickling from his eyes—"'The strange Man of the Inch,' is my father."

"Dear George, I do—I do, indeed, pity you," resumed Anny, suddenly extending her hand, and more than responding to the measure of his tears.

"God bless you, Anny," cried George, as he almost reverently touched her hand with his lips—"but you perceive at once, that on this wretched fact, I rest my vindi-

cation against the foul calumnies cast upon me."

"I understand it clearly, dear George."

"You may have overheard us speaking together in the lane, near his house. I was conscious that you must have known of the imputations in question; and I was praying of him to permit me to confide to you the secret of my birth, in order that you might understand why I had been discovered in his company at the bonfire. He sternly and threateningly repelled my prayer; but I now make the disclosure, in the teeth of his commands; because it is of less consequence to me to inherit his wealth, did he possess the produce of all the mines hid in the bowels of this round world, than, for one single day, to sink in your estimation. And I sought a private interview with you, because I durst not tell my secret to any other person."

"He wishes, then, that your consangui-

nity shall remain unknown?" demanded Anny.

"He does. Three months ago, when for the second time in my life I met him, we had not been many minutes together before he gave me to understand as much; adding, that the fact of even ordinary intimacy between us must be hidden from the world, and that, whenever we saw each other, it must be without witnesses, or else personally disguised."

"Did you ask his reasons for this unaccountable mystery?"

"I did, Anny—over and over—in vain. I found him a rough, peremptory man; he said the measure was necessary; was his will and pleasure, and that he should be obeyed; nor did he fail to remind me that even for my very bread I was at his mercy, and that disobedience on my part, and abandonment on his, should be cause and consequence.

There is self-evidence in the accents of truth; there is a blandness about sincerity, which is its own guarantee against doubt and disbelief in the hearts of those to whom it addresses itself.—Anny fully credited the story she heard, and her looks and manner towards the narrator were almost as kind as ever.

"Anny, behold the situation in which I am placed," the young man continued. "Although a stern and a dictatorial father, he has been a kind and liberal one to me, ever since the moment he rescued me from poverty and degradation; and, exclusive of my gratitude to him for having given me a station in the world, with education, and means to support it, it is my creed, my religious, conscientious creed, that, except for the commission of an evil act, we are bound to yield honour and obedience to—no matter what may be his private character,—a parent. To you indeed, Anny, I break the

commands laid upon me, in the present instance, because I feel, because I am sure, that the loss of your esteem were a warrant for self-destruction. But you will guard my secret; it is unnecessary for me to remark that you will—"

"I will, George Blundell," she said, "since I ought to do so for your interests."

"Putting completely out of view all worldly interests," he resumed, "I am bound to keep my father's secret, because he has commanded me to do so—am I not, Anny?"

"I should think so," she replied, though with a little hesitation, "yet in what fearful difficulties does it involve you!"

"Yes, Anny; I must be content to bear even infamy, while I do my duty."

"'Tis all very strange, and very unfortunate, dear George—may I ask you one question? do you think that public report wrongs your father?"

"I have dared to speak with him on the subject—he says he is not guilty of the things laid to his charge—he has stormed and raved at me for supposing the contrary to be the case; and, he adds, that his necessarily mysterious mode of life has subjected him to the gossip of the censorious and foolish vulgar, and that the misdeeds of others are undeservedly heaped upon him."

"Do you believe him?" again questioned Anny.

"Oh! that I could answer you that I did, Anny — but alas! alas! facts tending to disprove his words have come to my knowledge; deep, deep, in my bosom, I feel a horrid misgiving that report speaks truly of him; and that my father, *my father*, Anny, is a man of evil ways. And, taking this to be the fact — supposing it for an instant to be the fact, observe, Anny—observe how I am situated—as I am, must either submit to be considered as the accom-

plice of a man who, in this little quarter of the world, is openly called a desperado—I must do this, not admitting the connection of father and son between us; or, admitting it, I must abandon him, and say to the world, 'You are all right! this is the bravo and the evil man—' and, to save myself from social disgrace, I, his son, cast him off!"—again the young man became deeply affected and silent.

"Fearful indeed, dear George," said Anny, again giving her hand.

"And what should I gain even by this last course? what should even you gain, my adored Anny, supposing my lot and yours to go hand in hand, after it? why, I gain nothing but the base reputation of being the son of a depraved and detested individual; and you, nothing but the sharing of that reputation—if indeed I could ask you to encounter it. But I am here at present to tell you that I will not ask you to en-

counter it; to tell you that George Blundell's heart will eat itself away, in hopeless agony, before he asks you to change, for the worse, your present position of honour, of good and of virtue."

"Thank you, George—thank you, dear, dear George," sobbed Anny.

"No- dearest — I would not afford to the world, even at the risk of all my own worldly happiness, the opportunity to point one little finger against you; yet, you see to whichever side I turn, that world has the power, and indeed, according to its own laws, the right to scorn me. Oh, Anny, Anny, I have been foolishly proud of my own good name! and I have exulted in the consciousness of possessing, from the hand of God, a mind stored with many of the treasures which the poet, the historian, and the sage, offered to me for the gathering! Yes, Anny, and I have idolized the lovely forms of nature, and the lovelier

features of virtue: all displayed before me by the hand of that God; and I have turned with loathing from (I will only call it now) the disagreeable front of vice—and yet, at last, to be, without fault of mine, levelled with the vicious; to be classed with those minds which are made up but of a mass of sluggish matter, or of mere matter of a worse kind; to be classed with those who can laugh when they commit sin and outrage—and, by the indulgence of habits equally common to them and to the terminable brute, plodding with prone visage over the earth—who live themselves with that brute—nay, sink below him! Oh Anny, dearest Anny, this is affliction, indeed!"

"It is indeed, dear George," she said, in a voice of deep commiseration; "but, do you not think that you at present express yourself as if the mere name of virtue, and as if the mere reputation of high attainment, were equally important

as those qualities themselves? do you not, in the present instance, seem to set as high a value upon the shadow as upon the substance?"

"You speak to me," answered George, "as you have always done, my own dear Anny, like a soothing, and yet a correcting, angel. I do not know what to say further. I will, however, recur to one thing that I glanced at, when we first began this conversation. You remember I told you that from the very commencement of our ac-acquaintance, I felt I never could be worthy of your affection; and indeed, Anny, that's true; for there was about you a something of nature, and of goodness, and of purity, which surrounded me like a clear spring atmosphere — giving me the power to admire and to enjoy, but finding me deficient in any equivalent return. And it was therefore only that I always feared I could never obtain your love.

But when I did obtain it! Oh my God! what a change came over me! — what a change for earthly happiness! all that, however, has passed away. I may still continue to believe that you love me; but, as I have more than once said, I *must*, for your own dear, dear sake, reject that love, even though you were about to renew its promise to me. You shall not, Anny, pass along the streets of this town, and encounter a single human being who could say of you, 'That is the wife of the son of the bravo.' Anny, I do not yet understand my father; and in this avowal, perhaps, exists the full force of my present despair. For, Anny, disreputable as we all know him to be, here, in this neighbourhood, I have deeper fears of him. I have fears that extend beyond this place; nay, beyond our native country: I have fears of him, that I dare not express even to myself! and therefore, Anny, I say over again, and I say it more decidedly than

ever, from this moment you can have nothing to do with me—you *must* have nothing to do with me, except the affording me your full belief in my innocence, and in all the facts I have submitted to you; and then your full pity for my future lot—when, in consequence of those facts, and indeed, even of that innocence, I shall be for ever separated from you."

George Blundell, who had been standing up, during the latter part of his speech, sunk down exhausted and spiritless on a chair.

Anny had shed tears during his recital—at present she did not weep. She looked upon her old friend with uncurbed admiration; with admiration of his sentiments, of his principles, and we fear, indeed, of the graceful energy of his expression of them, as well as of the alternate flashing and sinking of his bold manly eye. Even after he had ceased to speak, she seemed to

listen to him. In an instant, however, she leaned her forehead upon her hand and, half turning from him, bent herself towards the table; the deep-black, glossy ringlets that had previously half-covered her throat and neck, now hanging perpendicularly and veiling her countenance. The young pair were for some time silent. At length, Anny quickly raised her head; tossed her hair back again upon her shoulders, and spoke; at first in a tremulous voice, then firmly, and eventually with intense pathos.

"George—" she said, and the young man bent eagerly towards her—"I give full belief and credit to every word that you have spoken in your vindication—"

"May God bless you, Anny, for that word!"

"And I think it necessary to state my full belief as a kind of necessary preface to what I must further declare. I have endeavoured to follow a certain train of thought, and as

you have been candid, and have expressed yourself most distinctly towards me, I may surely take up the same tone towards you. Dearest George—you sought my love — I gave it to you; and when I did so, no thought of mine was influenced by worldly considerations. Indeed, George, in it you had a gift as unsophisticated, as warm, and yet as pure a gift, as ever a young girl gave to man, while, for the first time, yielding up her heart's affections. I am not ashamed to say, nor do I fear to flatter you, when I declare that I bestowed that love upon virtue; upon high-mindedness; upon talent; upon genius; to say nothing of personal recommendation, or of your most sincere attachment to me. Nay, hear me out, George Blundell, for, I repeat, I do not speak to flatter you. Before these last few black days, nothing could have changed me towards you, except a discovery of your being less worthy than I supposed you to be of my

deeply-trusting partiality — since then I have doubted. But, upon this day I discover nothing that can give me a disagreeable impression of you — and, therefore, I am, as I have been ever towards you, dearest George."

George sprang from his seat, and was getting himself into some dilemma of grateful gallantry.

"No, no—" she said, "stand up—take a chair and sit by me if you will—" (what *did* he do?) "I have now candidly told you the opinions of my mind, and the feelings of my heart; and if they are any consolation to you, remember them and accept of them. But I cannot disguise from myself, meantime, that a woman has other duties than those of love to perform. I must not too hastily sink myself in the world's esteem—there, dear George, I agree with you, though you have manfully anticipated me. No; you are right—no—we must not be hasty—

in the young man's conduct. If his exculpation will bear scrutiny, why is it to be hidden from every one, except the person most likely to take it upon mere trust?"

"Should I attempt to give you any an swer," said Anny, "I must run the risk of, at all events, hinting what I am bound not to breathe a word of."

"Well, Anny, perhaps you can satisfy me upon one single point;—did Mr. Blundell make it appear quite satisfactory to you that he had no intimate connection with that very doubtful character, called the strange Man of the Inch?"

"My dear sir," continued Anny, after a short pause, "I am sure that, without the slighest breach of trust, I may reply to your present interrogatory. Instead of denying an intimate connection with this man, he openly avowed it to me; yet, upon the nature of that connection he rests his chief defence against the charge of participation

in the acts in which they are supposed to be jointly concerned; and here, again, I must add, I am not at liberty to explain further."

"Very, very strange, indeed," mused Mr. Kennedy.

"I admit it is, sir; yet, if my judgment be not very shallow, I think I thoroughly understand the case; and, indeed, I can confidently say that, to my own mind, George's acquittal is not pronounced by me on a hasty examination, or upon untenable grounds."

"You may feel all this to be very true, Anny, as matters appear to you, and as you feel they ought to be; but, dear child, your heart has not been unemployed in forming your decision; and I fear, much fear, that the pretending head is more frequently its partizan, than its judge, when appealed to, perseveringly, by that courageous little tempter."

"Indeed, sir, and is this the case?"

"Anny, dear Anny, I vouch to you my own experience in proof of my assertion. Alas! too well I know how unnerved the reasoning power becomes, when the heart tampers with its decisions. Oh! how filmed and warped then is the vision of the understanding! how inevitably does it deceive itself! Oh, Anny! it will deck the brow of a barren precipice with flowers, to hinder itself from seeing the gulph below, as well as to entice itself to its edge; and on—on—its dupe will rush exulting in a certainty of his clean-sightedness, until he reels and falls, for ever, ever falls, in his eagerness to pluck the visionary decoration! Anny, my dear child, I have, as I intimated to you, experienced something like this: forgive me, then, if I impugn your young judgment until I can examine, with my own eyes, the foundation on which it rests."

"Dear sir," resumed Anny, "though,

perhaps, not now with as much firmness of manner as she had hitherto displayed, "I can only repeat that, were I at liberty to detail his defence, you would deliver, with me, a verdict of acquittal in favour of George Blundell."

"And, Anny, *I* can only repeat, that until I know his defence as intimately as you do, I must withhold my verdict. I believe you will not call me an uncharitable man, and yet this is my conclusion."

"My dearest friend," cried Anny, with tears in her eyes, "what living creature can call you that? to me you are charity personified."

"My poor child!" answered Mr. Kennedy, mournfully, "even the fervour of the flattery you now offer me is proof that the affectionate little tenant of your bosom is more than a match for your too complying reason. Ever do you over-rate my claims to any thing like good qualities, and you have

no eye for the deep and visible blemishes of my character. Listen to me, dear Anny, even yet I am unwillingly bound to say that I consider this young man as an unfit visitor here."

"I have, myself, told him the same, sir; he is not to visit me at all; nay, communication of every kind is to cease between us, until he shall be able to prove his innocence to the world's full face."

"Thank you, my dear, thank you—" Mr. Kennedy took her hand.

"Or until, sir,"—Anny blushed and hesitated.

"Well, my dear child? or until——"

"That is, sir, unless the world continue to condemn him, without reason, for an unreasonably long period; and, in such a case, Sir, and when there is no friend left to him, but myself,"—she paused again.

"O my poor Anny! I thought as much—heart, heart alone, child, has been your

cc llor. I admire the noble confidence of your nature. I acknowledge the great value of your sentiment, in the abstract; but I fear its present prudence. You will believe me, Anny, I can have nothing but your dear happiness in view; but I will demonstrate to you, Anny, that the heart's promptings alone are not to be taken as guide to the right and the fit: and I will do this by laying before you the example of one who has been their victim, their most miserable victim.—Dear child, in the hope that I may be your warning, I will give you the history of my own secret griefs, although the recital of them may inflict a first keen wound on your affectionate heart; and although it probe anew those which, for half my life, have been festering in mine."

"Dear, dear sir," pleaded Anny; "I have always forborne to question you on this sub[illegible] because, giddy as I am, I could just discriminate enough to perceive that the [illegible]spect would be most distressing to

you; and do not now, I entreat you, my friend and my father, cause yourself pain on my account. Whatever your counsel may be, I will follow it merely because you offer it, assured as I am that you will never advise me against my affections, if those affections deserve your sanction."

"My good and sensible child, notwithstanding my long repugnance, evident even to yourself, to enter into the secrets of the dark past, I have lately begun to feel, while thinking it might be necessary for your instruction, that the effort might prove pleasing as well as painful to me. Besides, the making you my confidante, now, in your mature years, appears as a promise of some late consolation to me. Moreover, when friendship lends us an ear, it may, perhaps, be selfish and wrong for ever to hide even our misfortunes; and well I know, dear Anny, that a commiserating friend is to listen to my disclosures,—a true, a commiserating friend."

Anny, her tearful eyes resting upon his, raised his hand to her lips.

"Yes, yes, my child;—no use of words to give me an assurance. Indeed, for some years I have had the intention of confiding my cares to you, and what time for doing so can be fitter than the present, when I see a probability of your suffering from causes resembling those to which I owe my own wretched earthly lot?"

CHAPTER XII.

"You are not ignorant, my child, of the light in which the world regards me. While you were yet a little girl, I well remember your running home to me one day, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, after your defence of me against the charges of a young companion, and I remember, too, that the moment you saw me, you not only repeated all that had been said, but proclaimed your own generous disbelief of the

calumnies; and on that occasion, Anny, I declared to you that I had been much belied, and now I solemnly repeat the assertion. You know by whom I was rescued from poverty and neglect; and you also know that the world accuses me of the blackest ingratitude and of the most hideous treachery, in return for the obligations heaped upon me by my cousin, Harry Stokesbury. Anny, the world seldom sees but the surface of things. Motives for actions, it will scarce go to the trouble of calculating; and where there is room for conjecture, condemnation follows, instead of extenuation—no matter—with that hasty and uncharitable world I have had for twenty years no communication. It has judged me as it thought proper, and I have remained silent towards it, and secluded from it, with you, at our little hearth. Its sympathy I could not expect to find; its pleasures had no attraction for me; in a word, I have

left it to deal with me as it pleased, and very, very hardly it *has* dealt with me.

"Henry Stokesbury most generously rescued me from early distress; and, indeed, with his patronage, he gave me his affection. Did I only hate him in return? No—my dear child—he had my love for his love; and although in one lamentable instance I accuse my weak nature of having done him wrong—yes—a wrong it was, however unwilled or unintended by me—yet in all others I was his true, loving cousin, and grateful friend.

It is said of me that I fomented the quarrel between my benefactor and his father, for the purpose of grasping my cousin's patrimony. Oh! dear Anny—that is very, very untrue. I declare to you, my child, and it is the first time that I have ever opened my lips in self exculpation, that whatever human ingenuity could devise, whatever the most ardent friendship could

suggest, I tried in order to reconcile the father and son. But all my efforts were unavailing; the old man died in his rage; and, as evidence of its uncooled force, disinherited his only child—bequeathed his property to me, comparatively a stranger, and, frightful to add, Anny, with almost his last breath, cursed his offspring. But, my child, from the moment I became possessor of that property, nothing was ever farther from my thoughts than to take advantage of the angry bequest, which legally made it mine.—The vengeance of my cousin burst on me unawares, before explanation could be offered to him; had this not been the case, he would have learned that every shilling of his own had been treasured up for him; it was, in fact, my intention to have put into his hands an authenticated account, after having burned his father's will in his presence. But he had scarce heard one sound of my voice, when he left

me unable to utter another—nay—he parted from his country before I was sufficiently recovered to speak with him, or even to write to him. For even, upon the unhappy public occasion which doomed his expatriation, I could not appear. Thank God, at any rate, for having been saved from such a terrible exhibition of my feelings!

"The world wonders, Anny, why I have lived, and why I do live, so much within my apparent income. But to this hour, never have I applied to my own uses one penny of Harry Stokesbury's fortune; and when I am gone, it will be seen that I have stored up its annual produce, encreasing it, even, by every means; and that the manner of its final appropriation cannot be called unjust: on account of our humble expenditure in this house, dear Anny, I have not, in truth, dispensed more than half of the interest of my wife's fortune. And for all this, you have nothing but my word, Anny; but I am

assured that, with you, my word is sufficient warrant of the truth.

"But there is another matter, my child, regarding which, I wish my conscience could bear me out as courageously as it does upon the subjeet I have just spoken of; and here it is that, by continuing my story, I hope to instruct your heart, Anny, and to warn it to examine carefully the present state of its inclinations.

"By a clause in old Mr. Stokesbury's will, I was to be his heir, only on the condition of espousing his ward, Mary Bryan. My censurers assert that when the will became declared, I wedded her, in order to ensure her guardian's property, as well as her own. But such was not the case, and I have more than my assertions to offer at present, Anny. The registry of this parish, compared with the date of the will, proves that I was Mary Bryan's husband two months before that will was known to be in existence.

"Now, Anny, give me all your attention. As the ward of the elder Stokesbury, poor Mary Bryan lived under the same roof with him, young Harry and myself. Oh! Anny—if ever an angel's spirit animated a most beauteous human form, it did that of Mary! All mildness and all gentleness, all goodness and all loveliness, were expressed by her heavenly blue eyes—kind as it was radiant, her smile ever beamed on; so soft, and thrilling was her girl's voice, that it came upon your ear with the witching influence of that of the fabled syren's. And this glorious young being was, by her father's dying command, to wive with her cousin, Harry Stokesbury.

"Harry may have loved her,—nay, it is impossible but that he must have loved her; but to tell you that I loved her, Anny; would be a foolish endeavour to define, by cold words, the perfect prostration of heart and soul, of mind and existence, with which

I bowed me down before her. But, Anny, I do most solemnly and most sincerely asseverate to you, my good, dear child, as well as to the face of my God, who hears me, that, day and night, hour by hour, with incessant effort and effort, I struggled and struggled to repress every, the slightest, symptom of the gigantic passion which devoured me! For, first, it appeared to me the wildest presumption to calculate even a remote possibility of winning from such a creature a return of love;—and then came the sense of what an atrocious sin it would be in me to tempt even that impossibility, by the manifestation of a thousandth, thousandth part of what I felt for her. Indeed, indeed, Anny, to this hour, after the most careful, and, God knows, frequent examination of myself, I am quite sure that, until a certain period to which I must shortly refer, I never gave her cause by act, word, or look, to suspect my attachment.

"But oh! Anny,—the tortures of that time of self-repression! In the silence of the night, in my bed; in the solitude of nature, at mid-day, I have experienced over and over, the desolating contest of duty with love, of smiting conscience with raging passion! Tears, bitter tears, always proclaimed, however, at what side victory declared herself—and then I have lain, bodily-exhausted, as I was heart-hopeless.

"Some of the temptings of my spirit prompted me to ask myself the question—"*Does* Harry indeed love her?"—and I would foolishly, perversely answer—"No—he does not!—Where are the proofs of his affection?—of such an affection as Mary ought to command from all—of such an affection as she commands from me?" And then I would go on, idiot-like, till I had half convinced myself that he cared nothing for his affianced bride. "He at all times accosts her freely," I continued, "and never

is embarrassed in her presence; I tremble from head to foot, not daring to raise my eyes to hers, if occasion requires that we converse together — Nay, his conduct towards her is scarcely respectful; I have seen him act similarly to many other women, for whom he professed no particular regard." And thus, Anny, — observe me well—impotently, as well as impatiently, reasoning, because I thought only, by the heart—because, in fact, I did not think at all—thus, Anny, in spite of, I will say, virtuous wishes and intentions, at the bottom of my soul, I allowed to continue within me, the whisperings of a delusion which, at last, plunged me into irremediable ruin.

"Never had I dared to exchange with my idol even the few casual words rendered as matter of course by our relative situations, without marking, at the same time, by my manner, the distance due from one

in a dependant station, towards a superior person. But whatever might have been my cousin Henry's feelings for Mary Bryan, it was quite evident to me that the young girl herself regarded him, not only with indifference, but aversion. She was not ignorant of his wild habits—(perhaps they might deserve a worse name);—indeed, he made no great secret of them even to her ears; and she would weep at what I could perceive was her sense of his rudeness; and at other times I have seen her shrink and shudder, when she witnessed the violent altercations which frequently took place between him and his father: for, dear Anny, both unfortunately had very violent tempers; and I fear neither was good christian enough to curb the impulse of his passions; and very often when, after leading the disputants into another room, and there partially succeeding in reconciling them to each other, I have returned into her presence, I used

to find her in utter misery, writhing under the effects of present alarm, and of anticipation of future wretchedness, at the prospect of becoming the wife of one so totally different from her own dispositions, tastes, and sentiments. Anny, I will not disguise from you—for why should I do so—that it was not always by mere observation of her conduct and manner, that I came to these conclusions; she has distinctly avowed to me, on those occasions, her thoughts and her feelings. Oh! how heavenly dove-like was Mary! and when I would respectfully endeavour to give her a more cheerful view of things, and to hold up to her what I believed to be a bright side of my cousin's character; when I painted it as distinguished for generosity, and noble feeling, notwithstanding all its lapses, into thoughtless folly; when I represented him to her in the light I was sure he deserved to be shewn in by me; then, Anny, she more than

once timidly approached me, and, placing her hand on mine, said, in a tone of voice and with a look absolutely entrancing, "How can you advocate the cause of a man so unlike yourself?" Anny, my child, from time to time, such indications of a return of love for the love I bore to her heightened the battle between my sense of duty and the impulse of my weak heart, to something beyond my powers of description.

On the very last occasion upon which my cousin and his father contended together —that dreadful day, when the son in his heated passion, although tempted by his parent's hand, outraged that parent beyond extenuation; when he was obliged to fly from the house to avoid the shedding of his blood, by his father, and, indeed, it was myself who by weak struggles with Mr. Stokesbury, succeeded in securing him the time necessary for his escape; upon that day when I returned to the drawing-room,

I found Mary Bryan lying insensible on the carpet. She had been a witness of the terrible scene I have alluded to; had fainted during its enactment; had been overlooked by us all, and now lay before me, not yet recovered from her swoon. Without the necessary reflection on what I was about to do, I impulsively caught her up in my arms; and while my heart throbbed, and my limbs trembled with fearful apprehensions, I used every means at hand to restore her to her senses.

"She opened her beautiful eyes; she glanced round in affright; her look then met mine, and instantly changed into an expression of such bursting confidence, of such melting appeal, that, together with the former fluttering state of my feelings, it deprived me of all presence of mind, all self-controul.

"'My adored!' I cried, dashing myself at her feet, as she reclined on a sofa—'my

hears me, I declare that I did not, as might be supposed, say to Mary that I accepted her love. Nay, I tried all in my power to make her believe that the unwilling words which had so lately escaped my lips were words of folly and of madness, and contained no applicable meaning. I could not, indeed, force myself to assert that I loved her not; conscience itself was not able to make me belie my affections; but, with miserable tears, I sought to point out to her how treacherous would be my conduct, did I dare to avow my passion; I insisted upon the gratitude which I owed to my cousin; I described how base would be my return for all his bounties, were I to rob him of the treasure he had so long regarded as his own; and, when she insisted that Harry Stokesbury loved only her wealth, I endeavoured —feebly perhaps, because my conviction, I should rather call it my perverted impression, went the contrary way—but I did endea-

vour to convince her that Henry Stokesbury really loved her for herself, and that she would be happy as his wife. And in fact, Anny, I left her presence, on that occasion, without renewing any declaration of the feelings that preyed on me—that lacerated the heart to which I pressed them for concealment, even as the cloaked animal fed upon the vitals of the Lacedemonian boy.

"Nor did I, upon the morrow, seek occasion to ensure her love; nor upon the next day, nor upon the next; and for some time, Mary and I met as strangers,—alas! more strangely and embarrassedly than strangers could meet. But, at last, I perceived that the beautiful idol of my adoration began to droop; that her cheek was fading; her eye narrowing, and losing its lustre; and that her whole air and manner were weighed down. And then, Anny, how often, oh! how often, did I detect myself in the impulse, almost in the act, of casting

myself before her, and proclaiming, with ecstasy, the love which I nurtured for her! But still, and still, I could hold myself back by the withering recollection that, by so doing, I should stamp and seal to all eternity my own character, as an ingrate and a traitor. Oh! that this stern sense of duty had never quitted me! Oh! that it had ever, ever stood erect at my side, like a mail-clad and frowning sentinel, watching over my moments of human weakness! Above all things, O that my insidious thought of my cousin's indifference to Mary had never taken possession, — tempting, fiendish possession, of my breast,—my harassed and my frail heart! My child, let my fate, I say it again, be your warning.

"Anny, I fell at last. She heard from me renewed expressions of my love for her; and, with my arms around her, we knelt and vowed, in the face of heaven, a mutual vow. And then, for a short time every

thing was forgotten by me. In the intoxicating consciousness of interchanged affection, between Mary Bryan and me, all possible consequences, all possible remorse, vanished from my view. But even the roaring drunkard, in the midst of his orgies, will sometimes feel, shot through him, an icy and sickening conviction of the crime, as well as the hollowness, of his self-forgetting and unnatural joys; and I, Anny, I, before we entwined each other's arms that day, I was a most miserable human being; and I started away from my paradise of enjoyment, to seek the deepest solitude, like the ambitious, fallen angel, hurled at once from heaven into hell. I well remember the place, out of doors, into which, after running fast from the house, I plunged myself. It was a thick, though small, clump of trees, surrounded by a paling in the paddock; no space for reclining, or even for motion, had been prepared within it; yet into it I tum-

bled, I may say; and there, scratched and stung by the thorns and the nettles, its sole obscure brushwood, I lay, so far as regarded my bodily sufferings, as if I had reclined upon a couch of regal down. But oh! the bed for the mind and the heart! there was none—there was none. My very ears throbbed; and throbbed to the echo of the infelt accusation of traitor! traitor! the black sin against the charge of which universal human nature is said to rise up in arms!—that sin,—the sin of ingratitude, the certain presence of it, rose up and wound within me like the coils of a hideous serpent! I had betrayed my benefactor; the benefactor of my earliest years!—the man, the relation, and the friend who had saved me from absolute squalidness!—who had put shoes on my bare feet in childhood! who had given me education, or, at least, some of the opportunies for acquiring it!—who, at least, had taken my mind out of that quagmire state of inferi-

ority in which it might have been self-neglected, or else trampled down!—who, along with all that had afforded me abundant means of superfluously luxurious enjoyment;—and who, far above all, all that, had ———Oh! I was very sure of it!—conferred upon me his heart's affection.——Oh! Anny, my child, my child! I could do nothing but hide my face, even, I may say, from myself, and cry,—cry, Anny.

"Oh Anny! there is no real misfortune, but the conscience that accuses of crime! — A man may be plunged to the chin in apparent wretchedness!—poverty, sickness, long and racking pains may assail him; torturing pains, which seem to wrench his bones out of their joints, and to tear each little fibre of his nervously-constructed body into tatters; and, worse than this, even worldly neglect,—even the avoiding of you by one of your species, who imagines he has a cause of anger, or of superiority over

you;—all this, Anny, is nothing, nothing compared with one pang of an unquiet conscience!

"I still lay prone in my solitude, when I heard voices around me calling out my name. I appeared to one of those who sought me; he introduced me to another man, a messenger from my cousin, Harry Stokesbury. I stood before that obscure person weighed down with a sense of shame and degradation. With almost a felon's trepidation, and, I suppose, with almost a felon's look, I received at his hands a letter from his employer.

"Henry had now been absent from his home more than three months. During that time, his own man, the individual who at present confronted me, had been a confidential agent between us. We had, therefore, kept up a constant correspondence. His demands for money were incessant, yet I found means to supply them. His father had be-

stowed considerable sums on me, for the purpose of proving, as he gave me to understand, that his refusal of the constant demands of his son did not arise from a parsimonious disposition, but rather because he would not encourage Harry's spendthrift habits. Anny, every shilling thus received by me was transmitted through his favourite servant to my cousin. When such sources failed, I borrowed for him, wherever I could obtain credit; and I even requested and took loans from the gentle Mary, who never refused my applications, because I imagined I was only anticipating a resource which would ultimately become my cousin's undisputed right.

"The note which the confidential messenger now put into my hands contained only a few words, merely intimating that Harry was upon the point of setting off for a very distant residence; that urgent necessity

compelled his immediate departure; and that the bearer would verbally convey to me a request which he required me to fulfil, if I cared for him or loved him.

"I demanded of the man the nature of the service I was to perform; and learned, in the first place, that a sum of money, of which the amount surprised me, was necessary; but, Anny, how shall I express to you the effect produced on me by the communication of the second portion of the courier's intelligence! In the strictest confidence, on the part of Harry Stokesbury, I was informed that my cousin had been recently married; and the name of his bride was supplied to me. For some time before, I had been aware that Harry had occasionally visited the young person in question; and, to my mind, there was, therefore, probability in the servant's statement. Probability to *my mind*, I say, Anny; but, mark me still,—to my weak and credulous heart

there was, what there ought not to have been,—certainty!—Yes, my child; and even when my reason proposed a close and cautious investigation of the subject, that deceitful heart, panting with selfish exultation, turned me aside from my purpose. Oh Anny! I wanted to be deceived! that was the real truth. I wanted to believe myself made free, by Harry Stokesbury's own renunciation of her, to espouse Mary Bryan, and the most loose evidence of such an act, therefore, satisfied me. And when thus relieved from the tortures of conscience, which, but a few moments before, had been fastened upon me like gnawing reptiles, can you not imagine, Anny, the wild turbulence of joy which I, at length, experienced!

"The sum of money required of me, very considerable as it was, I soon made up; with it in his possession, the man went away; and next day I became, in secret, Mary Bryan's husband.

"For more than nine months afterwards I did not hear of or from my cousin. He had not intimated to me the place of his intended new residence, and I could not, therefore, expect that a letter from me would directly reach him; and although I did frequently write to the not remote retreat he had chosen, when first expelled from home by his father's violence, no answer ever came to my hand. But we met again, and that meeting was terrific.

"Two months after my marriage with his ward, old Mr. Stokesbury died; and, died, too, ignorant of that circumstance, although his last will proved that he had wished it. In vain did I assail, with entreaties and prayers, his death-bed, in order to prevail upon him to forgive his erring son, and call him home to receive a last blessing.

"Mary and I lived on together, under the roof which had now become Harry Stokesbury's, the two happiest of God's

creatures. I longed for the presence of my generous cousin to witness, and I was sure, to enjoy, our bliss; but he came not; and still I had no tidings of him, directly, or indirectly. My wife made me the father of a glorious boy. Unable, herself to nurture her baby, it was given in charge to a young married woman, residing in the neighbourhood. She was yet confined to her bed, slowly regaining her strength; the infant's nurse suddenly burst, in distraction, into her chamber, and told the mother that her first-born child had been torn away from her arms; and that, with curses and with threats of destruction towards it on his lips, Henry Stokesbury was the ravisher.

"This fearful and abrupt announcement threw my poor Mary into a dangerous fever. My fears and agonies for her were intense. And so, too, were my misgivings, on another account. Then first did I begin to doubt my former belief that Harry was

indifferent to Mary Bryan; then did I tremble at the thought that the last message I had received from him might have been a fabrication!

"I was not long left in uncertainty. The terrified young nurse had made her appearance towards night-fall. That same night I heard the house tumultuously broken into. My wife had fallen into a fitful slumber. I was sitting at her bed-side. The door was kicked open; Harry Stokesbury, with all the rage of a maniac in his look and manner, dashed into the room. Suddenly feeling certain of the supposed grounds for his coming violence, in vain did I start up to offer him an explanation; in vain did I implore him to listen to me, but for an instant. He beat me down with his powerful hand; with his foot he crushed me and trampled upon me, till I lay almost insensible. Loud and long shrieks from my wife partly recalled my fluttering mind.

Ghastly and bleeding as I was, I staggered up and cast myself upon the bed. In an instant she was dead in my arms.

"Consciousness now quite forsook me; and indeed, as I have been informed, did not, during a long, long period, revisit me. In fact, my child, and do not let me startle you by the avowal—for many blank and dreary years, I was a melancholy madman."

But poor Anny did start and shudder, too. Her guardian continued:

"When, after the long night of forgetfulness, reason's blessed rays again dawned upon me, I learned that Harry Stokesbury had been prosecuted and convicted for the commission of the acts I have described to you. Oh, Anny! had I been, at that time, a conscious creature, never should he have been questioned on the matter!—sooner would I have seen my adored wife die again—sooner, sooner should my own heart's blood have flowed, than that Harry

Stokesbury should have stood before the world as a culprit! I would have acknowledged the justice of his vengeance. I would have cast my wretched life, a thousand times, were it possible, between him and public disgrace!

"Yes, Anny; and I would have given up to him his right—his inheritance; I would have resigned to him even my Mary's dower—oh, I would have endeavoured in any way to prove to him that I was not the very, very ungrateful wretch he supposed me to be; and then I would have hidden my ill-starred head from the world, and lived—if that were practicable, upon my recollections. Oh, Anny, Anny, I learned that my loving, and my beloved, cousin had been convicted as a felon, on my account, and banished from his country—and then, that he had found a grave under the roaring sea; and I regarded myself, from first to last, as his destroyer!

"It was only very lately that I discovered the fatal error, to which I must immediately attribute my misery. You know Kynan Donnelly, Anny. A short time ago I employed him as a helper about this house — he had been the bearer of my cousin's last note to me. He it was who had feigned that damning message, from Harry Stokesbury, which informed me that he was married. Some months since, Kynan appeared before me very penitent; acknowledged his former crime, and seemed to me so truly contrite, as the unintentional author of my misfortunes, that I took him into my service —particularly as I understood that he was in great distress; and most particularly because, notwithstanding any former wrong against myself, I knew him to have been in early days the favoured servant of the ill-fated Harry Stokesbury.

Donnelly's motive for his conduct, upon the miserable occasion of all our sorrows,

seemed to me to be high-minded, and I could not blame him. He really did suppose that his master was the husband of the young person whom he had mentioned to me; he had not been unaware of the state of Mary Bryan's feelings; and, under the impression that he was doing a service to both parties, he gave to me, as direct information from his master, what was but the result of his own invention. I forgave him, too, on another account. I recollected that I should not have received his fatal message without rigorous examination, and I said to myself, that since I *had* taken it on trust from my treacherous heart, I was much more guilty than the bearer of it. Well — no matter — I have forgiven poor Donnelly—resentment, now, is not in the slightest degree a quality of my nature. Indeed, it is quite dead within me; and for nothing that has happened to me, do I reproach any body but myself

"Anny—you have heard the history of

my life. You now understand why, since you have known me, from childhood up to womanhood, I have bidden my head from the world. That world bestows upon me many hard names; well; perhaps it punishes me only as I deserve. At all events, I have bidden adieu to it without a murmur, and still in charity with it; because, though not as guilty as it would make me, still I know that I am very guilty.

"And you will now also understand, my dear Anny, why you have never seen the cloud of sorrow pass from my brow. You will now understand why I have so seldom smiled upon the sports of your childhood, the witcheries of your girlhood, and I may say the graces of your womanhood."

"Dear, dear friend," said Anny weeping, and again kissing his hand, "I do not recollect that I have ever, ever yet, wanted the encouragement, or the cheerfulness, or the sympathy of your beloved and respected smile."

"Well, Anny—I have only to thank you, over and over again for that generous assertion. But, I must continue to say, that you will now understand why I have scarce ever, ever, seemed cheerful in my own house; why, even my own servants look upon me with coldness, with affright perhaps; certainly with want of interest, and sometimes with rudeness; why I am not able to assert myself sternly and openly as a man ought to do, even upon the slightest occasion of annoyance. In fact, you will understand why I am the nervous, the shivering, the almost unmanly creature you know me to be;—why a loud word makes me start;—why the appearance of violence makes me recoil;—and, I wish particularly to say, why this day, this very day, I avoided the presence of our friend, Mr. George Blundell, when I saw, or when I thought I saw, his passion boiling for vent, against any opposing obstacle.

"Anny, it is not courageous to admit what I am about to add—but I have never boldly raised up my head since I was left trampled down, and disfigured in my own blood, at the bed-side of my departed Mary. Before that, I had had strong moral courage and, without boasting, I could prove the assertion; although I never was a strongly built man: and certainly never a brawling one; and it may be, that all I have suffered has weakened the nerves of my body—so as to give me the semblance of almost a trembling girl—when I see the least threat of approaching turbulence.

"Anny, you have early given away the affections of your young and generous heart. Mine is a history of the heart. Oh! profit by my example, dear child. Under your present circumstances, let not the mere impulse of your bosom determine you in the way you have to go. Do not

act because you want to act. Listen to the whisperings of affection, to their blandishments and their sophistry, with suspicion, nay, with alarm. In a word, keep my fate before your mind, and then I shall not have told my sad tale in vain."

We have followed Mr. Kennedy's narrative without interruption, because it seemed unnecessary to break it up by mentioning the agitated and frequent pauses he made in his discourse; or by describing the effects it produced, from time to time, upon his fair auditor. And now it is sufficient to say that, at its close, the gentle Anny felt most strongly for the sufferings of her guardian, exerting all her powers to bind up and revivify his bruised spirit; and that, before they separated for the night, Mr. Kennedy, while impressing upon her cheek a parting kiss, acknowledged, in an affectionate whisper, how much more endurable he now

felt, in consequence of her sympathy, the pressure of his griefs.

The same night, at a late hour, Anny and her attendant, were seated in the sleep-chamber of the former. They had been engaged in very earnest conversation, and had not therefore noticed how the time flew. The other members of the household had long before retired to rest, and all was dully silent around them;

The slumbering pulse of night stood still,

and, but for the low whisperings of Grace Carroll's voice, the fairy flutter of the moth's wing, as it whirled round the candle, might almost have been heard.

It was the nature of her theme, as well perhaps as the solemn midnight hour, and the awfully congenial silence, which subdued to a murmuring cadence, Grace's usual [illegible]rous tones. She had been descanting at great length on the supernatural endowments of the strange Man of the

Inch. She had been telling of his foul nightly revels, amid blazing lights, shouts of laughter, and sometimes, very strange to say, shrieks of seeming agony, with the devil and his imps: and of the spells which he cast on ill-starred females; and Grace stated, as a well-received opinion, nay, as an uncontroulable truth, that an impress stamped by the enemy of man, disfigured that side of his face which he so carefully kept concealed; and she was most eloquent on the nature of the unholy fire which burned in his uncovered eye.

Had Anny been uninfluenced by a pre-occupation of mind on the present subject, she might have smiled at all this improbable exaggeration; but she could not forget her own disagreeable encounter with the strange Man, nor the painful warnings of the Mayor of Wind-gap; besides this individual, so universally dreaded and detested, was the father of George Blun-

dell. She listened therefore, attentively, and all but assentingly, to every thing Grace Carroll was saying, or could say; bending down towards the girl, who sat on a foot-stool, some distance from her, in the attitude of one who is distressingly interested.

Suddenly she laid her hand upon the shoulder of her humble companion, and,—"Stop Grace," she said, "do you not hear a foot on the stairs?"

Unable to utter a word, Grace gazed at her in gaping terror.

"There certainly is some one creeping up the stairs," continued Anny, turning deadly pale, "and my door remains unbolted, I believe."

With the speed of great fear, agitated and trembling as she was, Anny tripped towards the door; but she had not reached it, when the handle of its lock turned; it swung wide open; and, before she could effectually cry out for assistance, she was

seized, and her voice stifled. Four men, carefully, though ridiculously, disguised, had entered the room, at once; and Grace Carroll, simultaneously with the measures adopted towards her mistress, was bound hand and foot, and also well-gagged.

"One word louder than your breath," said a growling voice in the girl's ear, "and I'll slit your wind-pipe, as nate as ever the little cook in the kitchen done it for the turkey."

They rummaged the apartment for articles of outside dress; and as many as they could find were hastily forced upon Anny's person, by the rough hands of her not gentle attendants. This done, she was borne away with well arranged silence and celerity. Through the open hall-door of the house, they conveyed her into the street; then rapidly to the nearest suburb; there they placed her on one of those small "cars," used by the peasantry of Ireland;

and, two of her captors holding her securely in it, drove it with the utmost speed of which such a machine is capable.

THE END OF VOL. I.

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